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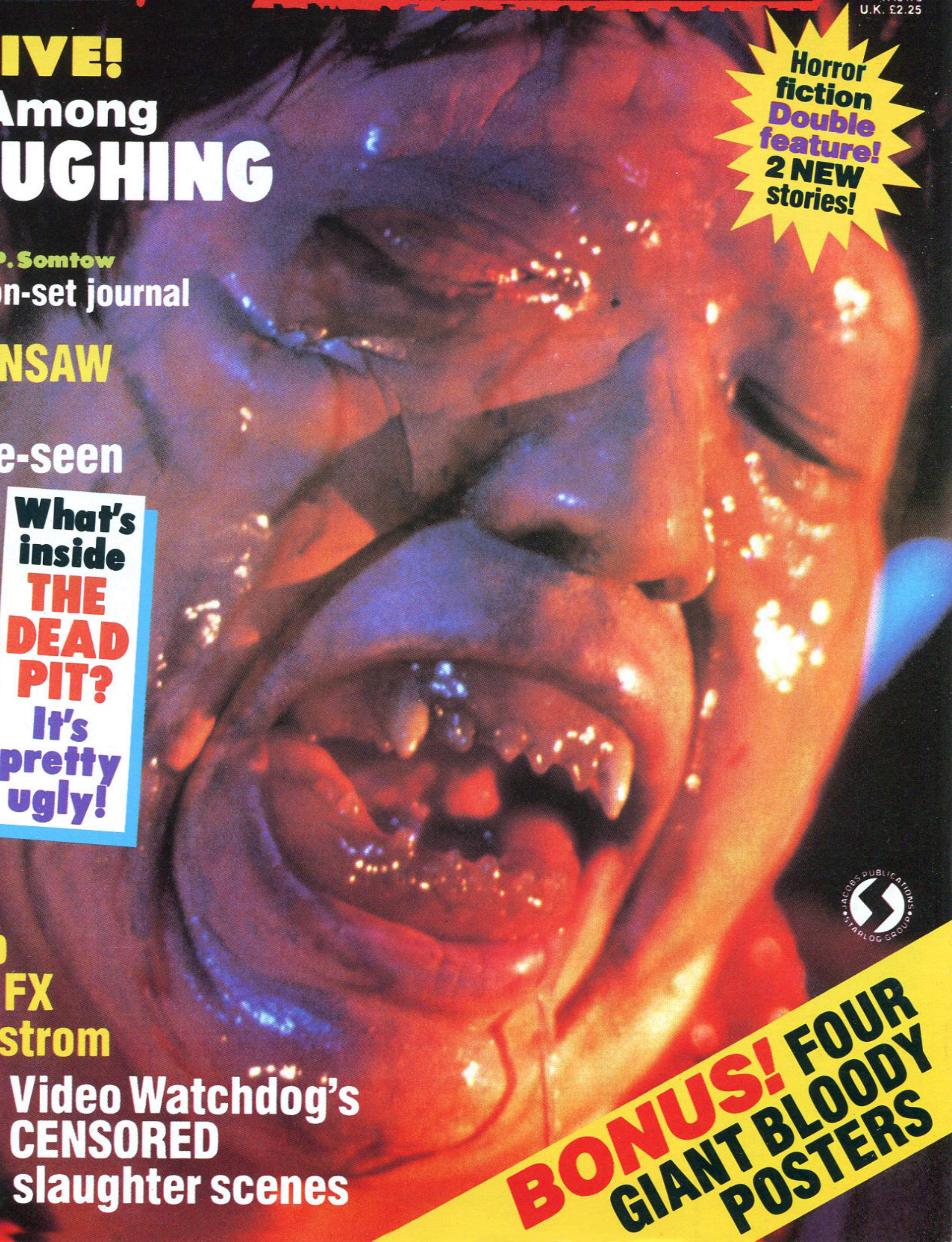

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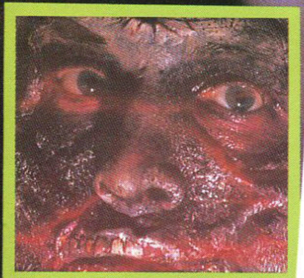

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Video Watchdog's CENSORED slaughter scenes

Horror fiction Double feature! 2 NEW stories!

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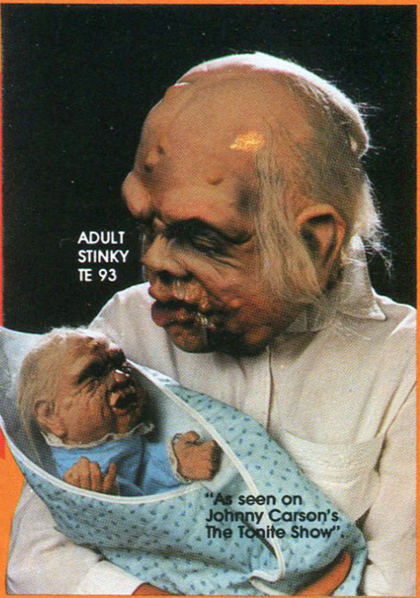
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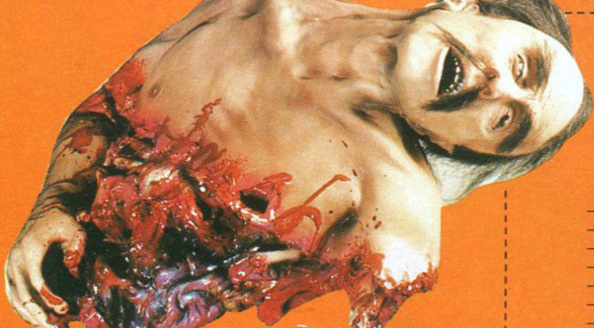

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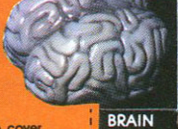
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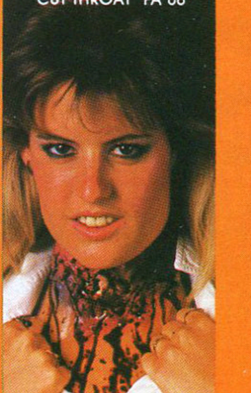

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GOREZONE

Sept. 1989
GOREZONE #9

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VISCERA

4 BLOOD FEST
Rats! Rats everywhere!

6 GUT REACTIONS
Censors never sleep.

8 PIECE O' MIND
Chas. dreams about the old days.

12 REVIEW: "EDGE OF SANITY"
Will Perkins do "Love Boat"?

14 PROFILE: JIM SIEDOW
The "Texas Chainsaw" chef discloses a few recipes.

18 PREVIEW: "THE LAUGHING DEAD"
Directing your own screen debut is nothing to chortle about.

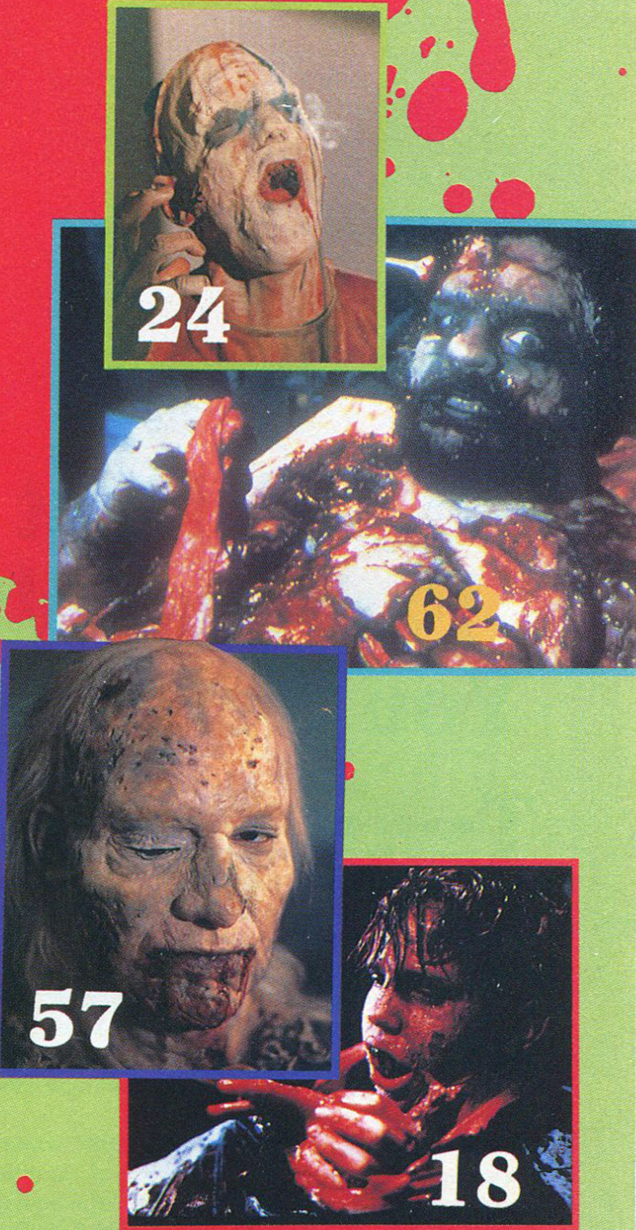
24 PREVIEW: "THE DEAD PIT"
What would you expect to find in a mass grave beneath an asylum?

27 POSTER SECTION
Linnea Quigley, "Edge of Sanity," "Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2," "Tales from the Crypt"

44 FICTION
A double feature! J.N. Williamson's "Jacks" and Darren O. Godfrey's "Clam Bake at Opaque Lake."

48 PREVIEW: "HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER"
Quite a few people don't want you to see this movie.

51 REVIEW: "HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER"
We want you to see this movie.



57 MAKEUP FX LAB
Special guest star Mark Shostrom on "Evil Dead II"

61 CLASSIFIED MASSACRE
Almost a page of 'em.

62 VIDEO WATCHDOG
TWE transforms Troma tripe.

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BLOOD FEST

If you don't catch *Henry* in your local theater (which is likely), MPI promises to release the unrated film on video this fall.

The Most Famous Film You Never Saw

The majority of you probably had not heard of the movie *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* before opening this issue of GOREZONE, unless you caught it at a rare theater showing in Chicago or New York City, or somehow nabbed a bootleg video copy. I just saw it, and I can't shake it. *Henry* stays with you like barnacles on a fishing boat. It's the most disturbing genre film I've seen in years and marks the debut of a major directorial talent, John McNaughton. The film's ordeal to find an audience is almost as distressing as its subject matter.

I first learned of *Henry* in early 1987 when some Vestron development execs told me of their interest in releasing the film. "But it's *too* hot," the source said. He added that legal problems would prohibit distribution because *Henry* is a thinly veiled biography of convicted murderer Henry Lee Lucas. Currently on death row, Lucas (or his lawyers) could conceivably sue the filmmakers. Then there's that certain problem with the MPAA, who branded *Henry* with an X rating. No, it had nothing to do with the film's violence; there's very little onscreen bloodshed, and most of the limited splatter is shown after the fact. The MPAA's reasoning for the X had to do with *Henry*'s "general tone."

Henry is just too real for some people. It frightens you and shakes you up because you realize that you know people like Henry—people whom you work with, who sit next to you on the bus, who stand on line next to you at the video store, who drive past you late at night while you're walking home. Michael Rooker doesn't play this mass murderer like a jittery Norman Bates, or a guy in a hockey mask, or a man with a fried face. He's a likable "normal" guy whose favorite hobby happens to be killing strangers.

Since *Henry* is so real, a lot of people are questioning its right to exist. Some say that the movie serves as a blueprint for potential serial killers, pointing out that the story is told from the killer's point of view. I totally disagree. For me, *Henry* is a cautionary film. It shows how physically and psychologically abused children are potential killers or abusers when they grow up. *Henry* hits hard because it reminds us of the horrors of random violence. And at the very least, the film is the last word on the perils of hitchhiking.

But that's not what interests me the most about *Henry*. When you do get to see it, just concentrate on watching a well-made movie and forget about the controversy. For $120,000, McNaughton and his crew have pulled off a visually striking psychodrama marked with style and intelligence. *Henry* is a perfect example of lean, mean filmmaking. There's nothing gratuitious, sleazy or cheap about it, unlike the slew of direct-to-video slasher films that still hog up shelves. We've given *Henry* five pages of coverage in this issue because we think it's special and deserves to be seen (not by children, though). Real or reel, *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* is one film you won't forget.

—Anthony Timpone
Editor

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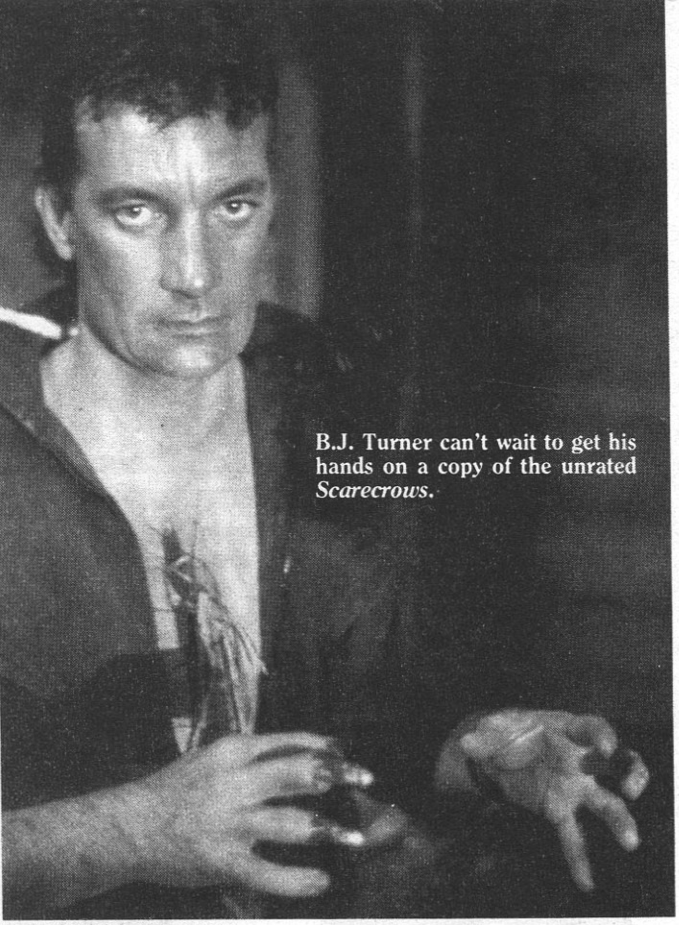
GUT reactions



B.J. Turner can't wait to get his hands on a copy of the unrated *Scarecrows.*

Photo: Courtesy Norman Cabrera

TENNEY ABASHED!

...I just wanted to say thanks for making me a part of your first anniversary issue. John Wooley's profile of me was so flattering, I'm still blushing. However, there is one small item I'd like to clear up: The college classmate who introduced Walter Josten and me was Roland Carroll, not Jeff Geoffray. Based on this meeting, Paragon Arts International was formed in order to produce my screenplay *Witchboard.* Once the film was in preproduction, Jeff Geoffray, another classmate, was brought on board to serve as producer. This seems like a trivial point, perhaps, but I like to give credit where credit is due. (However, I never give credit in place of cash.)

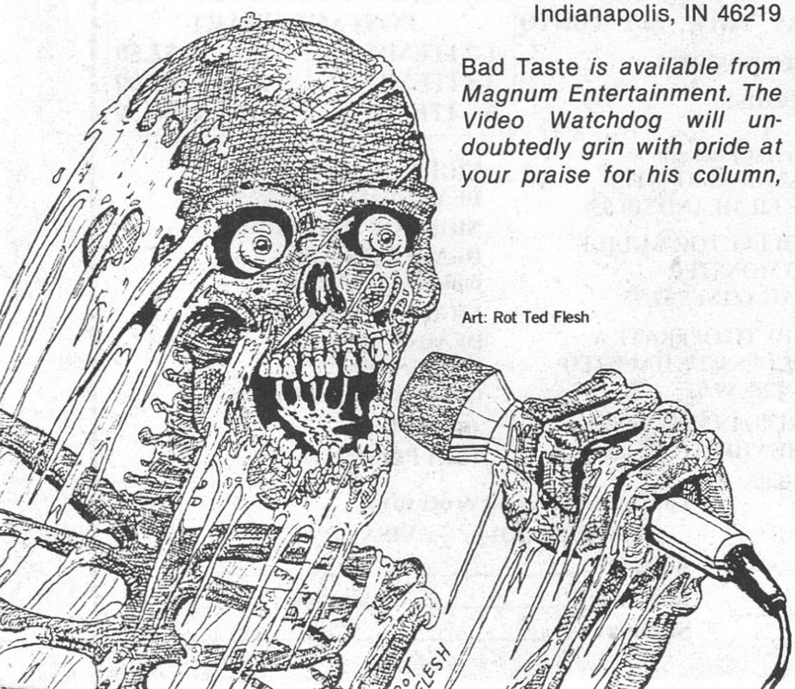
Kevin S. Tenney
Mentone Pictures
Los Angeles, CA

WATCHDOG PRAISED!

...I saw the article on *Bad Taste* in GOREZONE #5. I would like to know where I could get a copy. Video Watchdog is very helpful. For instance, I once rented *Bay of Blood* only to discover that I had seen it under the title *Twitch of the Death Nerve* (which was totally stupid to begin with). Video Watchdog prevents that sort of thing.

Kevin Dicks
650 N. Mitchner
Indianapolis, IN 46219

Bad Taste *is available from Magnum Entertainment. The Video Watchdog will undoubtedly grin with pride at your praise for his column, but if you ever badmouth* Twitch of the Death Nerve *when he's within earshot, he'll chew your leg off.*



Art: Rot Ted Flesh

ENGLUND ADMONISHED!

...I enjoyed your Robert Englund interview. Robert is a tremendous talent, and—speaking from personal experience—a helluva nice guy. However, I must clear up a misconception of his. I don't know where he got the idea that the remake of *The Blob* cost $35 million, but I assure him he was horribly misinformed. The fact is, *The Blob* cost $15 million.

Let me put that in perspective. These days, the average studio picture costs about $20 million—and I'm talking about straightforward "dialogue" pictures here, not special FX extravaganzas. I feel that getting *The Blob* up on the screen for a mere $15 million was quite an achievement, especially when one considers its enormous FX/action sequences. *The Blob* is hardly an example of fiscal squander. It is, in fact, an example of squeezing maximum production value out of every dime. Director Chuck Russell should take a bow.

Frank Darabont
Hollywood, CA

"NIGHTMARE 5" AWAITS!

...Your interview with Robert Englund in GOREZONE #7 was amazing. I loved it, and you should have a lot more movie star interviews.

And let's see more on *Nightmare 5*. I can't wait until it's done!

Colin Stoddard
18 Langmaid Court
Whitby, Ontario
L1N-6M7

Our A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child *coverage begins next issue. In the meantime, check out* FANGORIA *#85's exclusive set report (on sale July 11).* Nightmare 5 *opens August 11.*

LOVABLE "SCARECROWS"!

...I was looking through the horror section of my video store, like I do almost every-day, when I came across the movie *Scarecrows*. I remembered reading about it in GOREZONE #7. "I like my horror real scary," director William Wesley said. I was sick of dumb "comedy horror" films, and I wanted something serious, something different. I didn't want to see a bunch of teenagers running around getting chased by vampires. I'm only 16 and watch a lot of MTV, but I was sick of music video horror movies like *The Lost Boys*.

I fell in love with *Scarecrows*. It was the best of the year, probably the best since *Day of the Dead*. The screenplay was brilliant, the acting was great, the directing was perfect, and the FX by Norman Cabrera were outstanding, better than some of the stuff in big-budget horror films. Wesley was right about seeing the uncut version; the Bert (B.J. Turner) attack was the movie's best scene. I can't wait for *Scarecrows II*. If Wesley's first movie turned out this great, just wait until he has made as many as John Carpenter. William Wesley is a genius, another George Romero.

John Mattei
16 Silver Hill Road
Derby, CT 06418

NO ONE LIKES CENSORS!

...It's about time someone takes action against the people responsible for the ratings. I don't know how it is in America, but here in Europe, it's a disaster, a curse especially for us horror fans. Every film with "too much" sex, violence, blood or even political meaning (films from Eastern Europe) is cut down so badly that the whole sense of the picture is lost.

Not one film fanatic can live in peace as long as those maniacs are censoring pictures. Why can't they leave the movies in their original state and let the viewers decide what we wanna see?

When I see a horror movie, I want to be scared to death, and I will *not* blame anyone when I'm afraid in the dark after some creepy monster flick. When I decide to see a horror movie, I know what I can expect. It's my free choice and I can handle it!

Dumortier Eddy
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...I think everyone should write to the MPAA and say that you are in favor of the A rating for nonpornographic adult films. I took the liberty (being a gore freak since 1979) of collecting exactly 565 signatures and addresses to send them in with an explanation of why we *need* an A rating. How many of you have complained over the edited theater versions of such classics as *Brain Damage*, *Toxic Avenger*, *Hellbound*, *Friday the 13th, Part VII* and too many others to mention? Write to these clamheads and let them know there is an audience for graphic cinema. Without a new rating allowing these awesome FX to be seen, everything that comes out will be cut to lack the impact it may have had. Gorehounds must unite, or our films will die out!

Nick C. Barracato
Editor, *Stink* fanzine
27 Hillcrest Street
Staten Island, NY 10308

No one identifies more than we do with your frustration, but we must point out again that the situation is not *the MPAA's fault. If people want to protect their Constitutional right to view, hear or read whatever they desire, they must make their voices heard. Send a polite, neatly typed letter to the MPAA at 1133 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Tell them you support the proposed A rating for nonpornographic adult films.*

TO HECK WITH POSTERS!

...Just got GOREZONE #7, and I want to put in my vote for more continued in-depth editorial/interview material and less posters. This *is* the Information Age, right?

I'd also like to request Oregon or Washington area horror fan correspondence; as a screenwriter and genre buff, I want more direct contact with fellow devotees. Thanks, and may you thrive for fears—er, *years* to come.

Robert DuPree
9604 S.E. 5th Street
Vancouver, WA 98664

DESPERATE FOR BOOKS!

...I was one of the unfortunates who did not pick up a copy of Skipp & Spector's *The Cleanup* when it was released a couple of years ago. Now everywhere I call says the book's out of print. Have you any suggestions on where I might find a copy?

Doug Brown
Evansville, IN

John Skipp tells us that all of Skipp & Spector's novels will be rereleased by Bantam. Craig Spector adds that, publishing schedules being what they are, you shouldn't hold your breath waiting. With luck, it should reappear by the end of 1989.

Remember, address your letters and cartoons to GOREZONE Gut Reactions, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. Include a SASE if you want your art returned. Include a request for some famous person's phone number or address if you want us to laugh and throw out your letter. Sorry, absolutely no personal replies.

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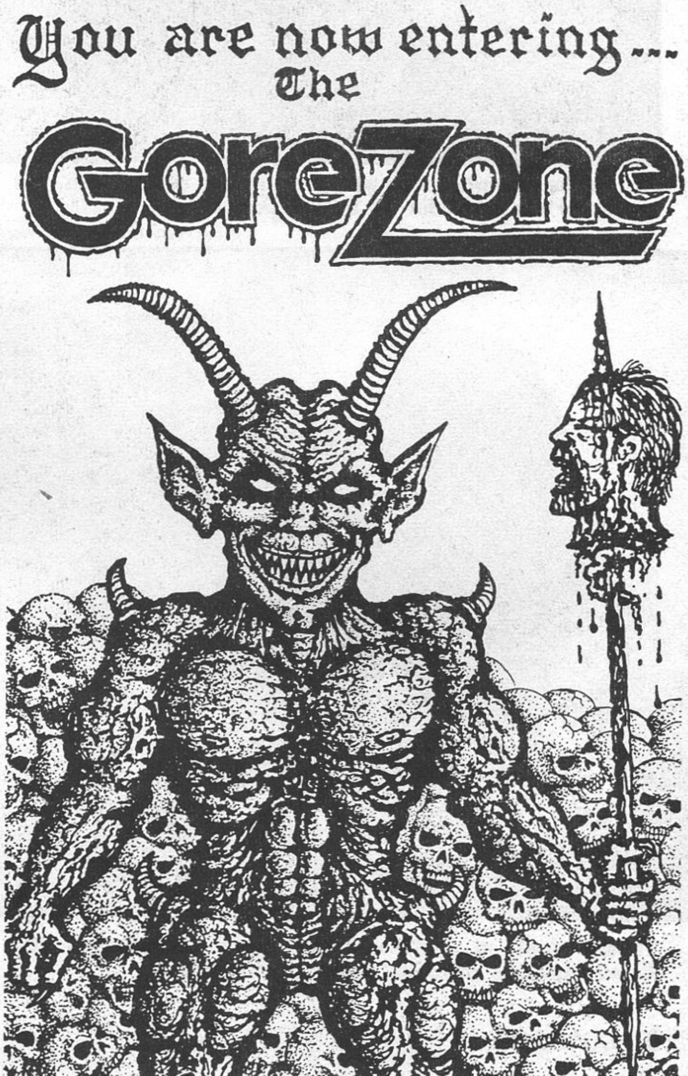


Art: Bryan Sessions

PIECE O'MIND

by Chas. Balun

The Golden Age of Gore, 1978-1983

Ah, for the days when men were men, women were women, and everybody was fodder for the likes of *Doctor Butcher, M.D.*

Brood Photo: Copyright New Wor

Though short on disembowelment, David Cronenberg's *The Brood* remains a disturbing landmark to this day.

Nearly every significant splatter film of the post-modern era (after the fall of Hammer Studios) was made before 1984, during a highly charged five-year period beginning with John Carpenter's *Halloween* in 1978 and climaxing with Sam Raimi's *Evil Dead* in 1983. The future directions horror would take were established by a mere handful of filmmakers whose seminal works would serve as the blueprints for the '80s. In fact, the overwhelming majority of this decade's genre output owes its origins to but five films: *Halloween*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Alien*, *Friday the 13th* and *The Thing*.

Let's affectionately refer to this fertile time as the Golden Age of Splatter. Because now, the thrill is gone. Today's horror fans are being cheated. There's an insidious conspiracy underway that threatens to undermine the very foundations of these United States of Splatter. Conscientious, dues-paying gorehounds had better beware; there are those among us who want horror films to become something that nature had never intended them to be—namely respectable, responsible and SERIOUS. The genre is at a crossroads...and look, there's a signpost up ahead. We're about to enter the *No Fun Zone*. Now, *that's* a really chilling thought. Where's Dr. Butcher when ya really need the guy?

Current and newly minted splatter fans are missing all the fun we had back in the late '70s and early '80s when Gore Nouveau first splashed onto the nation's theater screens, back before the VCR and the video revolution kicked the wind out of widescreen splatter and reduced it to something safe 'n' sane that could be brought home and corralled in the cozy confines of one's own living room. Horror tends to lose much of its bite when it's taken out of the dark. Fire-breathing, city-stomping atom age mutants especially lose something in the transition from movie screen to TV. What's the big deal about witnessing a 7-inch, snarling pip-squeak knock fly-size F-16s out of the sky? On video, the horrific personages of Leatherface, Jason and the Shape are dramatically reduced in both size and impact as to appear positively non-threatening. Even on a jumbo TV screen, these titans of terror look like twinks. Your Aunt Wendy's Pomeranian could kick their asses.

But video is, of course, not entirely at fault here, because it arrived on the scene at a time when splatter's Golden Age was already on the wane. Despite the

Controversial even among gorehounds, *Maniac* hasn't aged well. Still, it hasn't been surpassed, either.

steady stream of theatrical releases, most horror fans will now watch an overwhelming percentage of their films on the small screen and seem to almost prefer it that way. Producers and distributors have taken note of this trend and usually release only the big-budget, premier genre titles to theaters while the small, quirky and eccentric films are forced by financial pressures to make their debuts on video. Foreign gore films suffer a similar fate, since most American distributors continue to treat them as high-risk, low-yield investments. Too bad, because you'll probably never, ever get to see a Lucio Fulci, Umberto Lenzi or even Dario Argento film in a stateside theater again.

Call me a sentimentalist. Call me old-fashioned, but it was better back then and lots more fun. Films were braver, bolder, wilder and far less pretentious. Filmmakers took lots of chances. Important genre workhorses were stretching the limits of their craft and delivering the goods with eccentric, uncompromising oddities like *Martin*, *The Brood*, *Maniac*, *Mother's Day*, *Basket Case*, *The Boogeyman* and *Fade to Black*. Chances are in 1989 that few of these films would be granted a theatrical release. As the cost of filmmaking has skyrocketed, fewer distributors are willing to take chances with risky product. And a film containing bizarre subject matter and over-the-top gore is sure to win top billing on the endangered species list. Kinder, gentler horror films? *P-TOO-IIEE!!*

There was a time, not very long ago, when rascally, gonzo gore films like *Zombie*, *Gates of Hell*, *Buried Alive*, *Night of the Zombies* and *Dr. Butcher, M.D.* stood tall and proud, bearing their "unrated" label with heartwarming pride and conviction. Some righteous, chunk-blowing directors saw this stamp as their Red Badge of Courage. Gorehounds applauded their guts. The MPAA treated 'em like a five megaton fart in a full-packed elevator; still, the films saw the light of the projector's beam. Even then, the usually

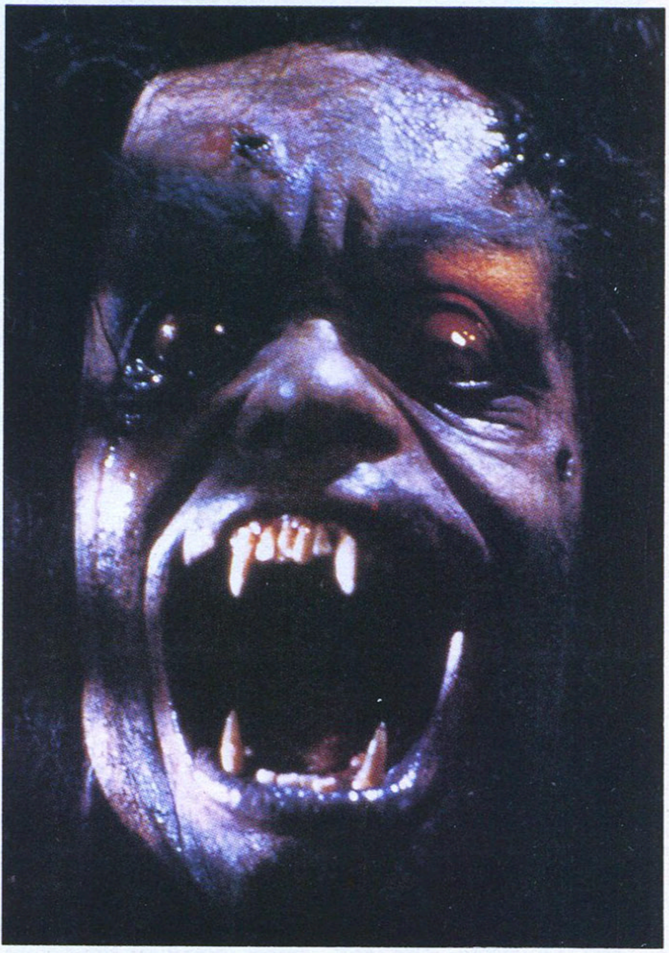


Photo: Courtesy Stephen Jochsberger

Have all the many post-*Howling* transformations been necessary?

Films like *The Boogeyman* made do with less-than-sky-high FX budgets.

More chestbursters? Our resident splatter gourmet will pass.

stodgy and prissy MPAA, whose mental sphincters had not yet puckered shut, occasionally let their scissors slip, and rowdy films like *I Spit on Your Grave*, *The Toolbox Murders*, *The Brood* and *Friday the 13th* sailed past 'em with relatively squeaky clean R ratings.

On video, Leatherface, Jason and the Shape appear positively nonthreatening.

Not so today. The anti-gore guardians are ever vigilant. Good thing these Bush league storm troopers weren't marching back then when even the *posters* were more unsettling than most of today's mousy offerings. Gone are the days when the one-sheets plastered about your local shopping center multiplex would promise, "We are going to EAT you!" or introduce a deranged medico who's "a depraved, sadistic rapist...a bloodthirsty, homicidal killer... and he makes house calls!" a la *Dr. Butcher, M.D.* Forget about the classic and misleading "cut, chopped, broken and burned beyond recognition" campaign for the notorious *I Spit on Your Grave*. That's exactly what would happen to both the poster and the film were it released today.

Those were simpler times, my friends. Things really seemed fresh and exciting then—because, frankly, things *were* fresh and exciting. Trends and subgenres had not yet been firmly established. Important horror directors-to-be worked on their chops and polished their techniques, anxious to prove themselves to their colleagues and to the audiences who had nurtured them through the early days of their careers. Though several of these filmmakers later became megabuck big shots, many fans still feel that their first few films remain their strongest and most accomplished efforts. John Carpenter, George Romero, David Cronenberg, Tobe Hooper, Wes Craven and Joe Dante were among the horror elite then; today, only Cronenberg has realized his full potential.

During those early, formative times, the Cult of Personality had not yet been considered as a factor in a film's success. This was before a movie became "a John Carpenter Film" and long before Tom Savini had become a household name. People didn't flock to a movie simply because some semifamous cult director or makeup artist had worked on it. Many of us didn't know a Baker from a Barker from a booger.

We weren't faced with an avalanche of horror magazines that told us in slavish, behind-the-scenes detail how everything was done, either. We didn't even know what a cable-controlled, fully articulated, animatronic rod puppet was in those days. Yet, some of the extremely "primitive"

Think back to the first time you saw this, and ask yourself if it's ever been as good since then.

There was a time when rascally, gonzo films stood tall and proud, bearing their "unrated" label with pride.

makeup effects work (the trendy FX moniker came much later) still managed to provide many of the most startling, unforgettable and incandescent moments in modern horror. Consider these *six* specific scenes that knocked fans out of their seats, and reflect upon the scares-per-dollar ratio of these landmark moments. Because, after bombardment from many current big-budgeted multiteam FX spectaculars like *The Fly*, *Leviathan* and *The Blob*, you'll come to appreciate the economy of these early efforts. Though their budgets comprised only a tiny fraction of their modern-day counterparts, the impact of these scenes reigns unparalleled in today's films. They may do it better now, but these guys did it first:

(1) The poor schmuck who answers the door and has his head blasted into crunchy Jell-O by a SWAT team shotgun in *Dawn of the Dead*. A modest effect, perfectly timed and slyly edited.

(2) The "chest-burster" supper scene from *Alien*.

(3) *Friday the 13th*'s arrow-through-the-neck effect.

(4) The exploding head in *Scanners*.

(5) *The Howling*'s first werewolf transformation.

(6) The slo-mo eyeball piercing in *Zombie*.

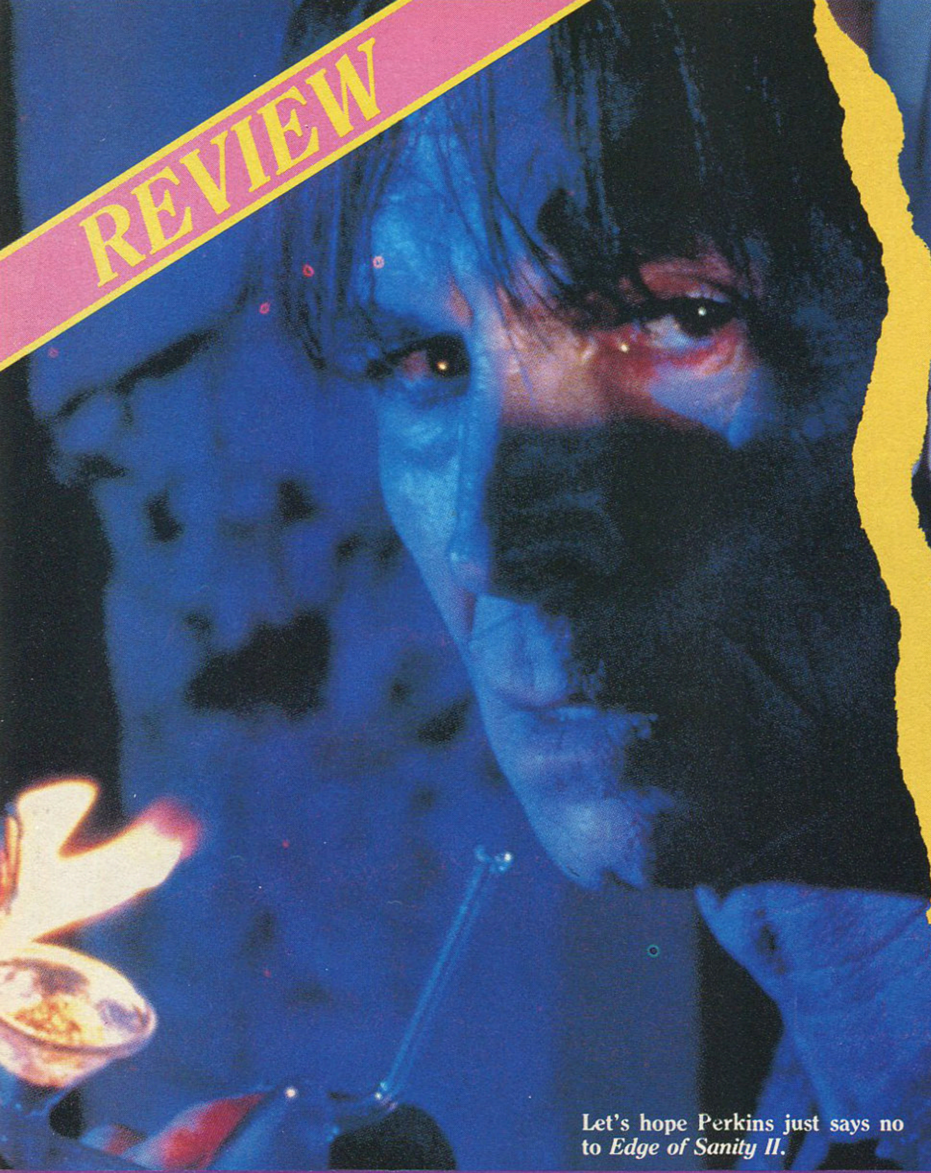
Despite the fact that FX artists have become the high priests of splatter and now have individual cult followings, it remains to be proven that a $3 million pneumatic animatron with 36 operators is any more effective than some guy in a bald cap who's been doused with oatmeal flakes and colored Karo syrup. It's all in the *timing*, and you can't just buy that, no matter what your budget.

Looks like it's a tad late for this young lady to be *Buried Alive*.

Just imagine, then, a contemporary film festival celebrating the nostalgic times of a bygone era when killer drillers, melting spacemen, horny salmon hybrids, psychotic sausage packers and gut-barfing ingenues could be seen in all their gory glory, doing the Danse Macabre up there on the BIG screen.

See you there, fellow splatter sentimentalists, when the Chunk-Blow Chateau Multiplex presents "The Golden Age of the Gore Film." I've already sent for my tickets.

REVIEW



Let's hope Perkins just says no to *Edge of Sanity II*.

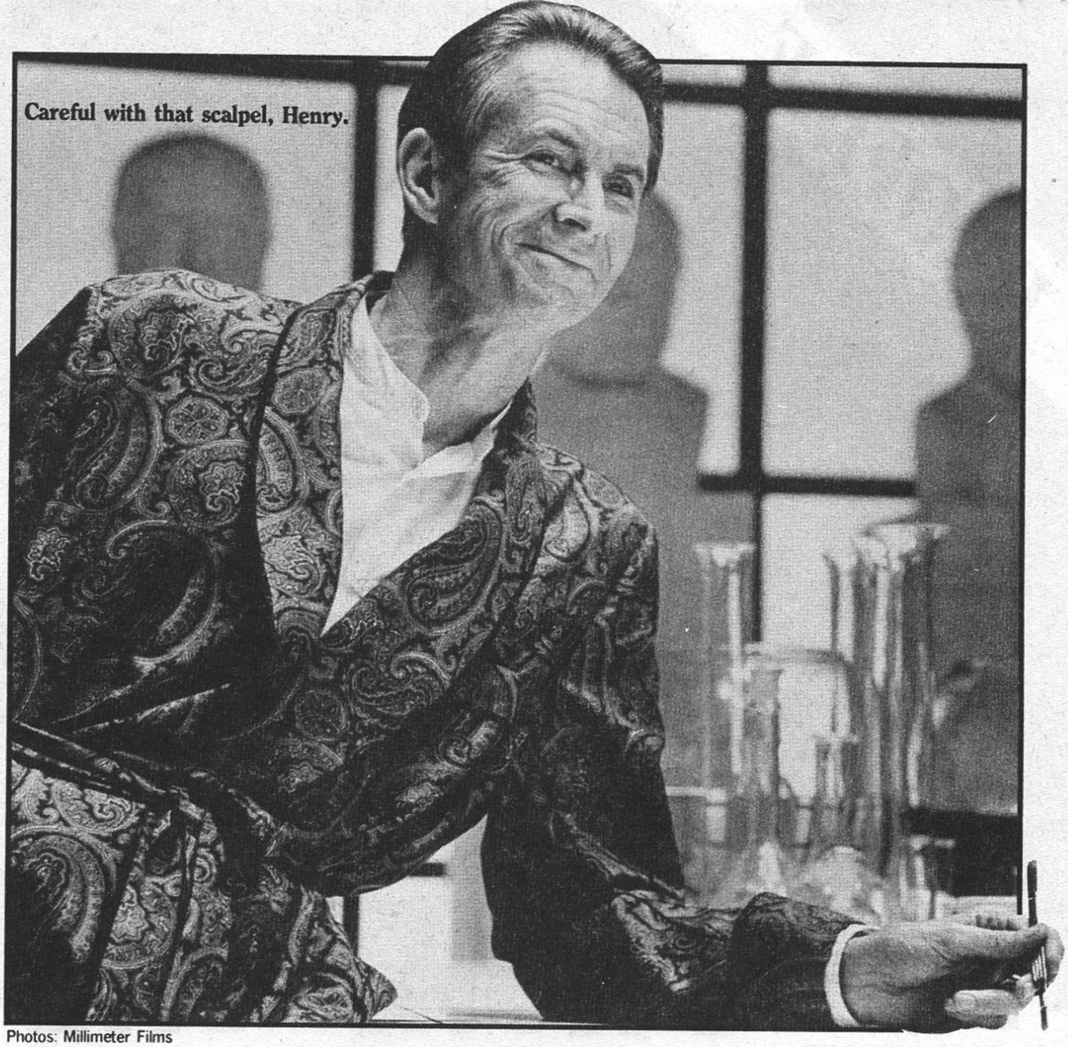
Young, virile actors confront the terror of being Ken Russell-type characters in a Jess Francoesque script.

EDGE OF SANITY

"...doesn't threaten the '80s' So-Bad-It's-Good champion, but certainly not for lack of trying."

By MICHAEL GINGOLD

This Mr. Hyde owes more to head Stooge Moe Howard than to Fredric March or Spencer Tracy.



Careful with that scalpel, Henry.

Photos: Millimeter Films

With the rise of the new trash aesthetic a few years ago, the So-Bad-It's-Good classification suddenly became legitimized. This allowed many people to admit that they secretly enjoyed certain films for their sheer awfulness, and led to some filmmakers' actually trying intentionally to achieve this "quality." But the result was such abysmal fare as *Blood Diner* and others, the makers of which failed to realize that a movie must be accidentally inferior to be true So-Bad-It's-Good. Case in point: *Edge of Sanity*, which doesn't threaten *Silent Night, Deadly Night Part 2* as the '80s' So-Bad-It's-Good champion, but certainly not for lack of trying.

Given the nature of this tawdry offering, it's no surprise that distributor Miramax (a heretofore respectable outfit) is hiding behind the pseudonym Millimeter Films. More surprising is that *Edge of Sanity* is hitting the big screen at all; this is a direct-to-video special if ever there was one. It's yet another film that tries to update the themes of a horror classic, in this case *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson (who mercifully goes uncredited). Here, the modernization reduces the discovery of the harnessing of man's dark side to the invention of freebasing. Dr. Jekyll (Anthony Perkins) is busily working on new anesthetic when a lab monkey knocks some ether onto a suspicious-looking white powder, and Jekyll emerges from the fumes as the psychotic Mr. Hyde. This time out, he's called Jack Hyde, so the film becomes Dr. Jekyll and Jack the Ripper as Perkins starts slaughtering typical cinema London prostitutes. (You know the type—they start every sentence with " 'Ello, love.")

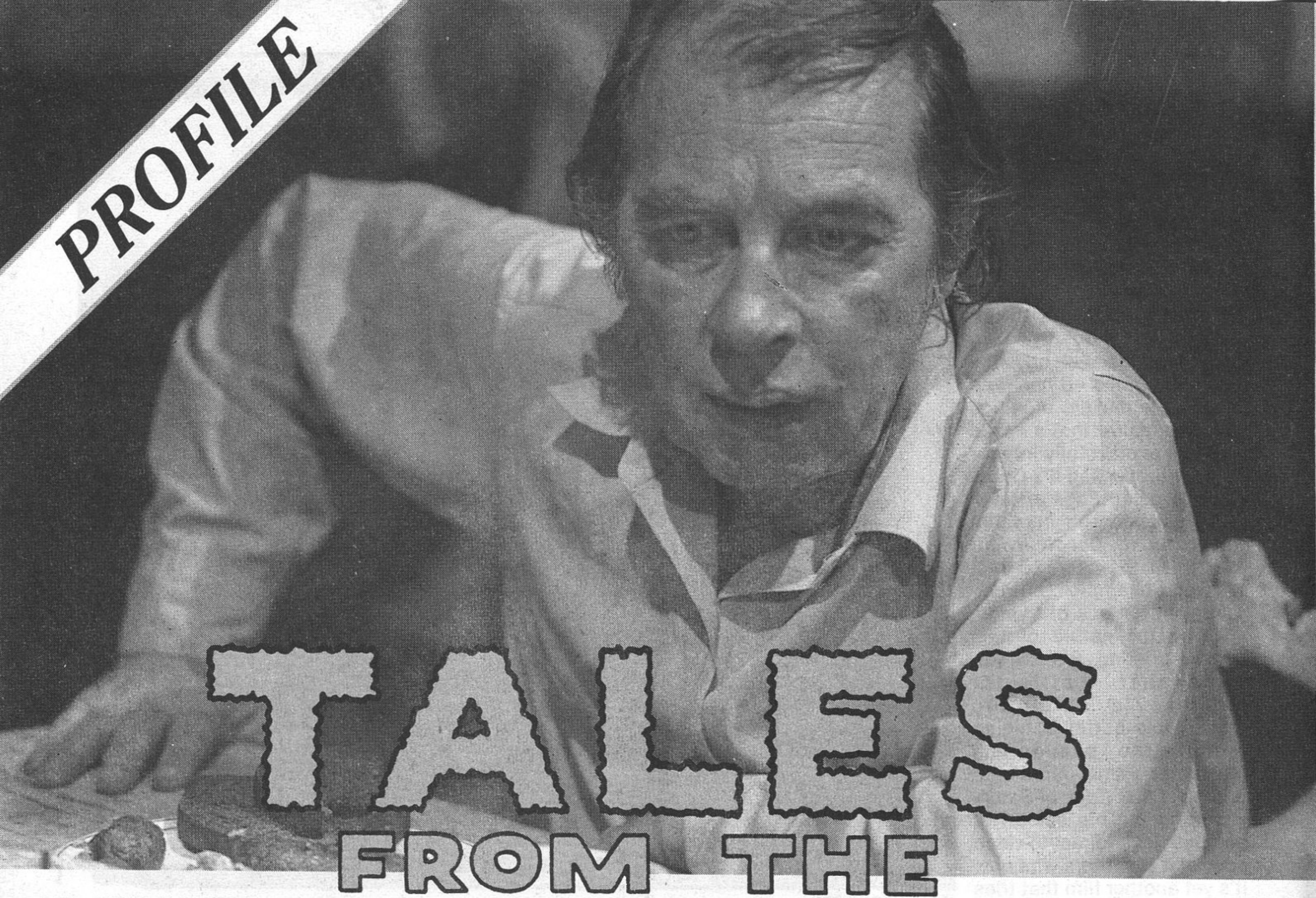
One of the key elements marking this film as prime So-Bad-It's-Good material is Perkins' performance. In the *Psycho* films, Perkins proved he can play maniacs with some degree of subtlety; not so here, as he twitches and pulls instant expression changes and generally raises the alarming suspicion that the coke he's constantly ingesting is real. Even as Jekyll, his performance is full of tics; the only way you can tell he's transformed is from the pasty-faced makeup he wears as Hyde. Perkins has occasionaly said that he doesn't want to be solely known for the *Psycho* series, and this film may help his cause, though not necessarily in the way he's hoping.

He's certainly not the only one overdoing things, however. Director Gerard Kikoine takes this whole thing *verrrry* seriously, trying to make a statement about modern drug problems and even dressing some of the characters up in modern garb to further his point. The result is scenes like one in which a hooker takes Hyde back to her loft, which looks like a leftover set from *Flashdance*. When she begins to disrobe, revealing a metal belt with the word "BOY" molded on it, and Perkins says he can't get down to business "because I'm bad," you'd swear the scene is a lead-in to a music video.

Some might say that Kikoine's approach smacks of Ken Russell, and indeed, when Hyde visits a brothel called Madame Flora's, he seems to stumble consecutively on the sets of *Gothic* and *Lair of the White Worm*. But *Edge* seems even more reminiscent of the zoom-happy style of Jess Franco (who, like Kikoine, has his roots in soft-core porn). There are countless bizarre, surreal scenes with looming close-ups of lips and eyes, and the movie frequently seems to be a slightly higher-priced remake of Franco's *Jack the Ripper*. The connection extends to the credits: Producer Harry Alan Towers worked on several Franco projects, and one of the writers is credited as "J.P. Felix," a truly Francoesque pseudonym. Perhaps he was responsible for lines such as one spoken by a doctor, examining a prostitute with vicious lash marks all over her back: "Did somebody beat you?" And although the sets and costumes are opulent enough, the film still looks kind of cheap; when Jekyll's wife and some friends go to the opera (intercut, of course, with Hyde going nuts), all we see are the three of them sitting in a small audience box while Placido Domingo is heard on the soundtrack. (This doesn't bode well for Towers' upcoming *Phantom of the Opera* remake, which looks to misuse horror celebrity Robert Englund and is directed by Dwight Little, who himself trashed a fright icon in *Halloween 4*.)

Edge of Sanity works on none of the levels it's supposed to, but that doesn't mean it isn't kinda fun, if you approach it in the right frame of mind. It's not worth considering paying theater prices to see it, but So-Bad-It's-Good fans could do worse (or should I say better?) than to check it out when it hits video.

PROFILE



TALES FROM THE COOK

By TOM RAINONE

"The lamps started cooking the skeletons, and the meat started going bad, and everybody started getting sick. But we kept going!"

Now you just hush, it won't hurt none. Why, ol' Grandpa's the best killer that ever was. Why, it never took more than one lick they say. Why, he did 60 in *five minutes* once! Say he coulda done more, if the hook-and-pull gang could have gotten the beeves out of the way faster. . ."

It's hard to believe 15 years have passed since the Cook first delivered those immortal lines to helpless victim Sally Hardesty (Marilyn Burns) in the original *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, the film that has arguably become the most hailed exploitation independent chiller in cinema history. Over the years, throughout numerous rereleases, probing interviews have appeared with the likes of the Hitchhiker (Ed Neal) and Leatherface (Gunnar Hansen), but little has been heard from the man who put the spice into Chainsaw Chili, Jim Siedow.

Acting has been the most consistent element in Siedow's colorful life; all of us have come to love this guy as the Cook, but who would imagine that, in addition to churning out tasty barbecue, Siedow played his part for Uncle Sam in World War II and the Korean War, directed and starred in a variety of stage productions, and even acted in a film alongside Tobe Hooper before *Texas Chainsaw*?

Siedow meets your correspondent at a restaurant in Houston, Texas (of course!), where he has lived the majority of his life. Dressed in a rather unique polyester outfit with a brown Western-style blazer, Siedow melts into his chair with a cigarette dangling from his lips. His distinctive facial expressions, gestures, and prominent voice leave no doubt (or disappointment) that there's a lot of ol' Jim himself in his best known character. Actually a native of

Cheyenne, Wyoming, he left his rural surroundings at age 18 to begin his acting career on the New York stage. "I did all kinds of different shows," Siedow recalls. "I spent a year touring shows for the W.P.A. theater, which was sponsored by the government. Then World War II came, and off I went."

After the war years, Siedow went to Chicago and pursued his acting career. There he got into radio soap operas. "That's where I met my wife, who was also doing radio soaps," he grins. "After we got married, we bounced around doing road shows and eventually ended up here, in Houston. She was pregnant, so we decided to settle down and do something that made money." Once situated in the Republic of Texas, Siedow established a commercial carpet cleaning business. This earned him the stable income he needed for his family, and also enabled him to come and go as he pleased, due to the luxury of being his own boss. Thus, Siedow plunged back into acting, performing in numerous plays in the Houston area, as well as dinner theater tours.

Photo: Courtesy Edwin Neal

Having established his position as a recognized, well-respected stage actor, Siedow began directing plays. In the course of an extensive stage career, he appeared in such productions as *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *The Lion in Winter*, while his directing credits include *Visit to a Small Planet*, *Critic's Choice* (which he also acted in) and *Murder Among Friends*.

This barrage of work ultimately led to feature films and his association with director Tobe Hooper. Siedow got his first role as a rock star's father in a movie titled *The Windsplitter*. "That was done a year before *Chainsaw*," he recollects. "It was filmed in Columbus, Texas. The plot centers around this hippie, longhair, motorcycle type who gets run out of town. So he goes out to Hollywood, where he manages to become a film and rock star, and then comes back to his hometown. When the boy returns, there are these three tough guys always giving him a rough time, beating him up. Tobe played one of those fellas. That's where I first met him. He was talking about doing *Chainsaw* at that time, and soon after, he called me and asked me to be in it."

A new challenge awaited Siedow. Cookin' up folks isn't exactly the sort of thing one usually encounters in stage plays. "I spent hours trying to figure out what I was going to do," the actor shakes his head. "How was I going to play this crazed cook? I didn't know what kind of director Tobe Hooper was. Fortunately, he was a very fine director—he knows what he wants, and he gets it out of you. I would've played it altogether differently if he hadn't told me what he wanted, and it wouldn't have been as good."

Like Neal and Hansen, Siedow developed a natural feel for his character. In fact, sources indicate that such memorable lines as, "Look what your brother did to the door! Don't you have no respect for your home?" (screamed at the Hitchhiker) were adlibbed. Times often grew rough during the grueling shoot, compounded by the scorching heat of a Texan summer, but everyone pushed on. "Jim became an inspiration to us," raves Ed Neal. "Jim was incredible fun to work with, the sweetest, most gentle person that you'd ever want to be around. He had a great intuitiveness as an actor. The scenes shot with him were extremely easy to play, because he made it just a real joy."

On the other hand, Siedow marvels about a time when Marilyn Burns' last word to describe him would have been "joy." "In the night scene where I beat her up in the barbecue shop, at first they tried using these soft rubber clubs, but they didn't work," he grimaces. "They looked too fake. So they said, 'We'll use a real club.' It took me a long, long time to try and fake it with this real club. I just *couldn't* hit her, and it didn't look right, 'cause I couldn't follow through with my swing. Finally, someone yelled out, 'Hit her!' Marilyn responded, 'Hit me, I don't care, let's get this done.' Once I started hitting her and gettin' into how to do it, it took eight takes before they said, 'That's a print,' and she just fainted dead away. She was bruised. Oh, I laid it on her. I had to."

When asked about the film's most memorable shooting experience, Siedow hesitates. "It's hard for me to remember

The Cook "just can't take no pleasure in killin'."

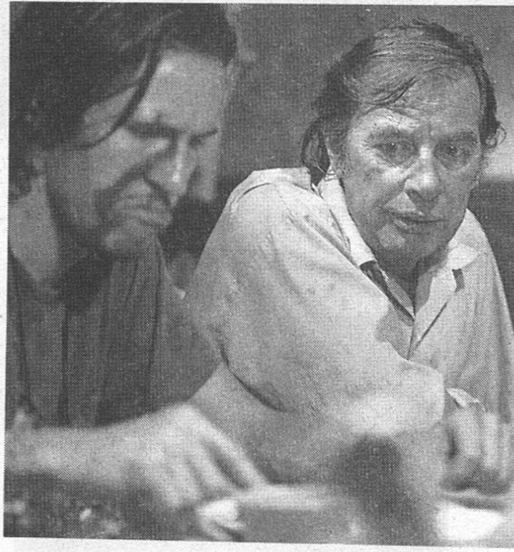


Photo: Courtesy Edwin Neal

While he notes the lack of intensity in *'Saw 2*, Siedow got along well with new cannibal brethren Bill Johnson (left) and Bill Moseley.

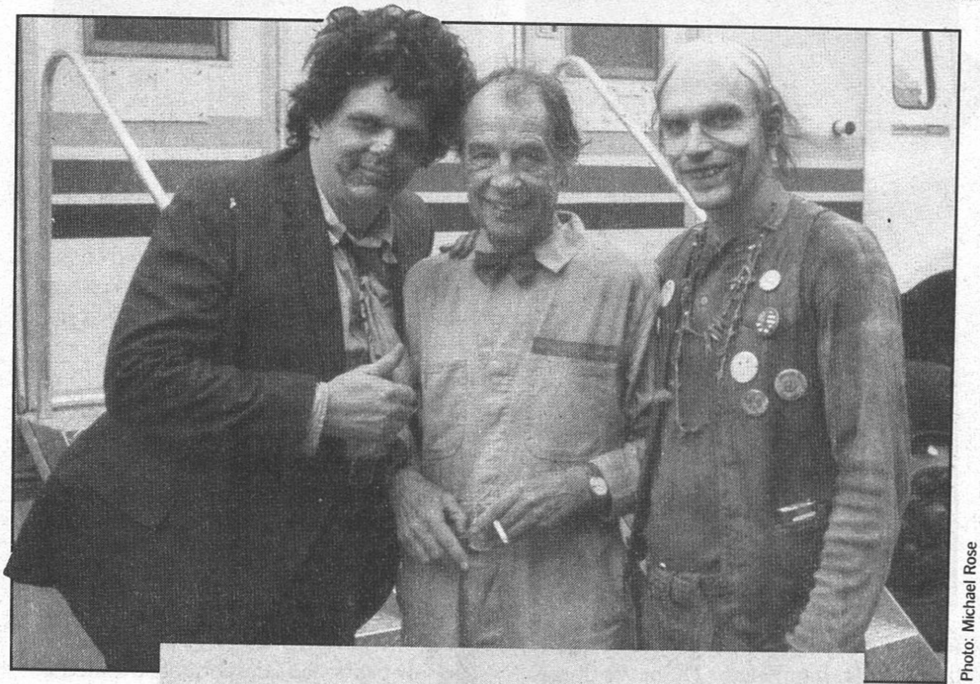
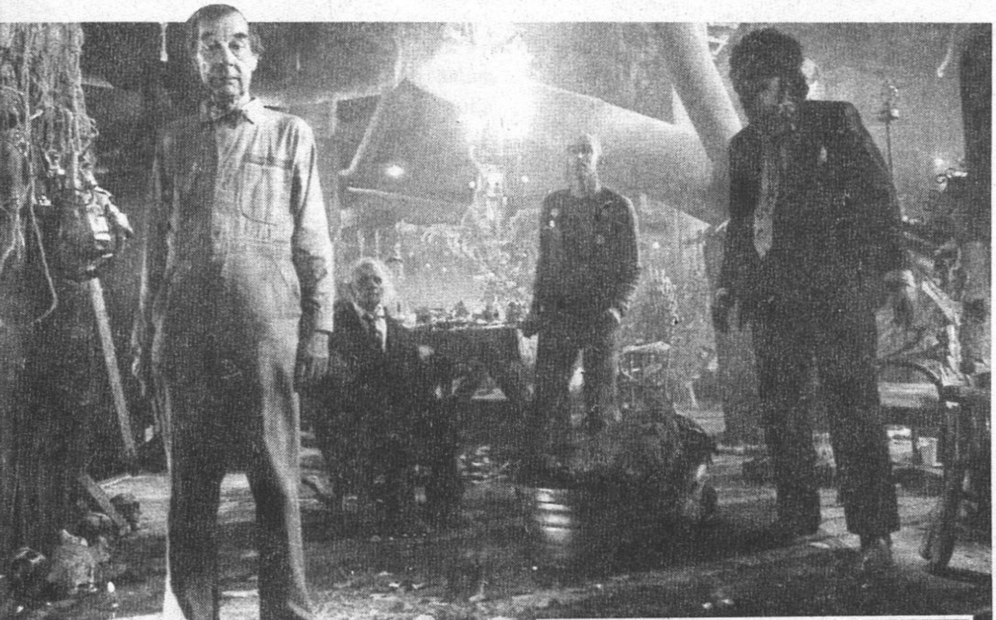


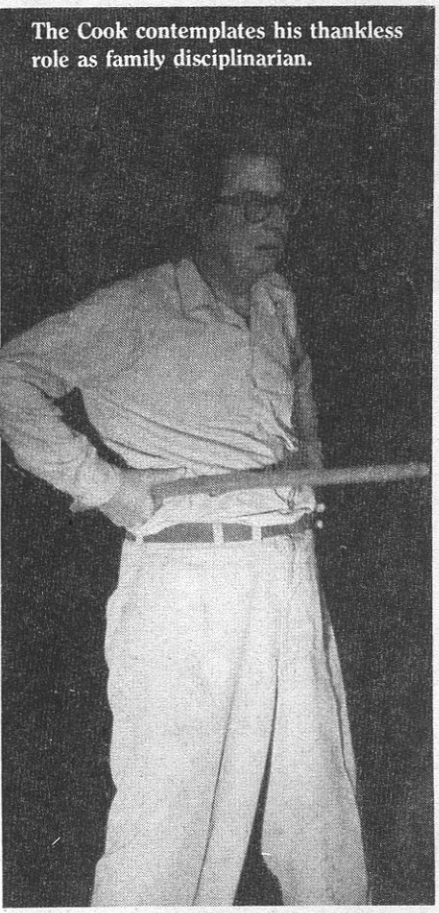
Photo: Michael Rose

> **"On the first one, we were just a bunch of people knocking our brains out to do something for almost nothing."**

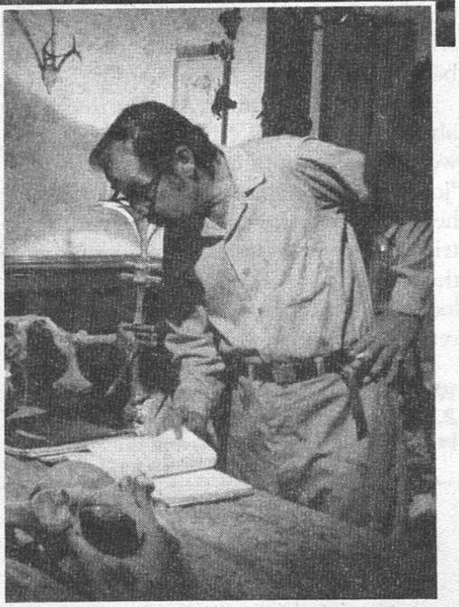


The increased budget showed most favorably in the sequel's new home for the chainsaw bunch.

Photo: Copyright 1986 Cannon



The Cook contemplates his thankless role as family disciplinarian.



The meticulous Siedow checks a few lines.

Photos: Courtesy Edwin Neal

now," he decides. "There were so many things that happened. I'll never forget our 27-hour shoot on the last day. That was the dinner table scene. We shot that straight through for 27 continuous hours, since I had to leave to do a show in Houston. They were running out of money, and they just had to get this thing over with. *Whew*! We had all the heat in the house. Man, was it *hot*! The lightbulbs and movie lamps started cooking the skeletons, and the meat started going bad, and everybody started getting sick. Oh God, it was terrible. But we kept going!"

After *Chainsaw* wrapped, Jim Siedow returned to the stage and his cleaning business. Strangely, *Hot Wire*, *Red Alert* and a couple of Houston cable programs were Siedow's only other celluloid attributes, until Cannon took on the 1986 production of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*.

For years, fans desperately awaited a sequel. During the hiatus, rumors—especially in the Texas area—spread like wildfire. For instance, it was once announced that Hooper was writing a sequel with Marilyn Burns in which her character, Sally Hardesty, would be released from an insane asylum. From there, she travels Texas roads, again with friends, in search of the chainsaw clan. The group eventually stumbles into a small backwoods town completely controlled by the clan. The Hitchhiker was going to be alive, but half-crushed; the family has him tied up to a tree, where he becomes permanently attached! This whole ingenious affair was allegedly titled *Beyond the Valley of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

Instead, after a 12-year wait, many fans felt that all they got was another "horror comedy." Only three veterans surfaced from the original: soundman Wayne Bell, former cameraman Lou Perry, who returned as an actor in the role of L.G. McPeters, and Jim Siedow, the only cast member rehired. But after all that time, Siedow came back better than ever as the Cook, known now as Drayton Sawyer. Equipped, as always, with his expressive eyebrows, spry movements and unmistakable voice, Siedow stood alone in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2* and, to many, remains the most enjoyable aspect of the sequel.

For Siedow, making *Chainsaw 2* was a more pleasurable experience. "On the first one, we were just a bunch of people knocking our brains out to do something for almost nothing," he points out. "The equipment—ah, well, you know, it was shot on a 16mm camera with only one soundtrack. The *Chainsaw 2* guys were all West Coast professionals. Like in that truck scene, in the first one, when I get Sally in the bag and drive off? Well, the truck didn't move; there were guys inside jiggling it up and down and running by with tree branches!

"In *Part 2*, when I was in the catering truck, things were a little different," Siedow continues. "That was all done with a tow truck driving through town and a police escort, with lights and five cameras on the back of the truck. It was beautiful! *Chainsaw 2* had all the amenities. I hear things about how bad Cannon is, but as far as I'm concerned, there couldn't have been a better outfit to work for. All these things I heard and read in the newspaper about being paid less than scale were just not true. It was above scale."

Siedow hadn't really seen much of Hooper in the 12-year interim between the two pictures. For Hooper, this time was spent directing several unmemorable films, including *Lifeforce* and *Invaders From Mars*. Had the glitter of Hollywood transformed him over the decade from the young, charismatic

(continued on page 54)

Behind the 'Saw

Photo: Courtesy Edwin Neal

For a shot dropped from the final movie, original Hitchhiker Ed Neal got fried on Texas blacktop.

We've all watched behind-the-scenes peeks at box office blockbusters before—glitzy, show-biz palsy documents of Skippy and Georgie's latest sci-fi megahit. They're beautiful, expensively made documentaries about beautiful, expensively made features. The affluent principals lounge gorgeously in their exquisite Laurel Canyon abodes, quaff coolers and kvetch good-humoredly about location shooting in some godforsaken hole where they didn't sell Dutch beer. That's Hollywood on Hollywood: money talking.

It seems only natural, then, that a documentary about such a dark, twisted masterpiece as *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, with its comparatively nonexistent budget and cast of relative unknowns, should have a folksy, tyro feel to it. At least, that's what Brad Shellady believes. After an exhaustive cross-country car trip with his Doornail Films crew, this young filmmaker has delivered an affectionate, well-informed account of this genre landmark's genesis, fittingly titled *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: A Family Portrait*.

Shellady garnered an invitation few GoreZonians would pass up. He was the houseguest of Gunnar Hansen in Maine's wooded verdure. Well, it wasn't too verdant, actually, when Shellady alighted from his cramped '78 Nova. It was, pardon the pun, the dead of winter. The relative isolation of the locale translates into an odd, almost mournful separateness in Hansen's segments of the documentary.

Their mission in Maine complete, the crew returned to their Chicago base for two days of much-needed rest. After this his brief respite, they headed south, logging even more miles on the beleaguered Chevy. "The car already had 130,000 miles on it," Shellady recalls, "and we still had to go down to Texas to meet with Ed Neal." Luckily, Jim Siedow lives in Texas as well, so the trip was doubly productive.

Pressing the brave Nova (not to mention his own mental and physical reserves) to the limit, Shellady lit out for parts west. John (Grandpa) Duggan was the last cast member to be interviewed. "We were so gone from just mental burnout," Shellady sighs, "that the California trip was a pleasure." While there, the crew paid calls on superfan Forrest J Ackerman and the amazing colossal Chas. Balun. Both these genre scribes appear in the documentary, but the visits were more than just strictly business, the director admits.

"After the interviews," he says, "we messed around, bought a few posters [from the voluminous Ackerman collection] and basically just hung out." After nearly a month of nonstop shooting, a little sack time was perfectly in order.

Ah, but then it was on to the business of editing. Surveying the footage in his Chicago headquarters, Shellady was faced with extracting a coherent 64-minute package from more than 32 hours of videotape, supplemented with clips from the original film. The picture that emerges from the finished product is one of sincerity. The viewer gets the feeling that any dedicated troupe with no budget, a moderate degree of talent and (perhaps most importantly) a bit of luck could conceivably turn out a groundbreaking piece de resistance. Furthermore, seeing these now-familiar faces out of character offers a fascinatingly pleasant disorientation; particularly engaging are the soft-spoken poet Hansen and the on-set mishaps related by Duggan and Neal. "Tobe Hooper has said all he had to say about the film," explains Shellady of the director's absence from the tape.

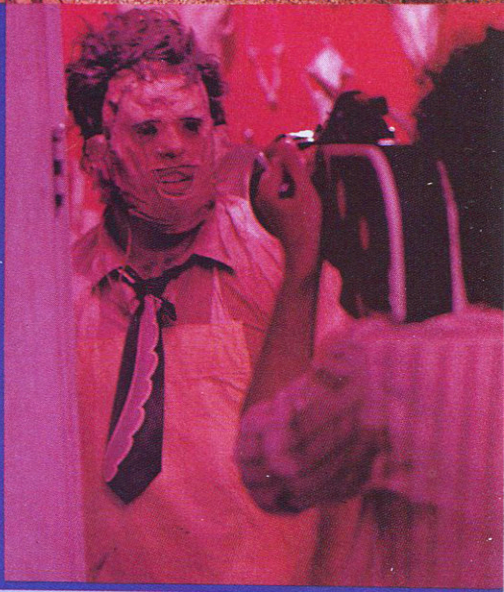


Photo: Courtesy Edwin Neal

"Hi. Do you know me?" Gunnar Hansen's credit card endorsement deal collapsed when American Express execs finally saw the film.

The sigh of relief Shellady and company breathed when they wrapped the project was huge even by Windy City standards. The ball was now in the court of Shellady's partner, Alan Arluke. It was Arluke's job to package and distribute the finished product. Just about every fiscally solvent gorehound is probably eager to glom a copy. For information, contact Alan Arluke, 75 Chickasaw Trail, Medford Lakes, NJ 08055.

It'll set you back a mere $23.95 (postpaid), and is available in VHS only. No plans exist as yet for a Beta release.

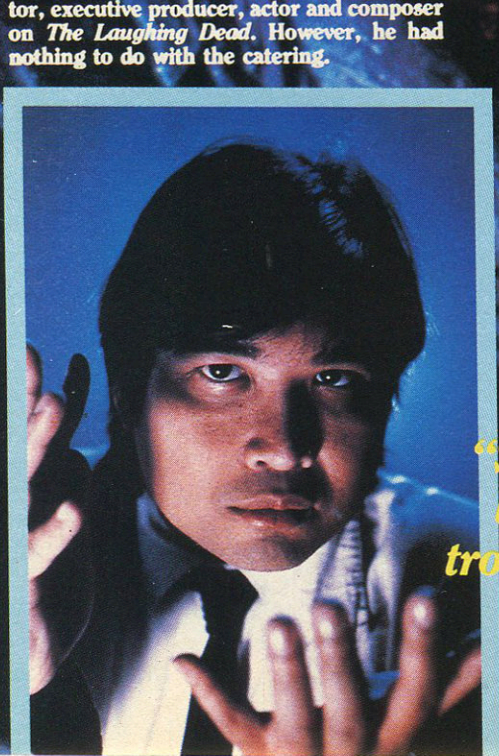
—John Walsh

PREVIEW

NINE MONTHS AMONG THE LAUGHING

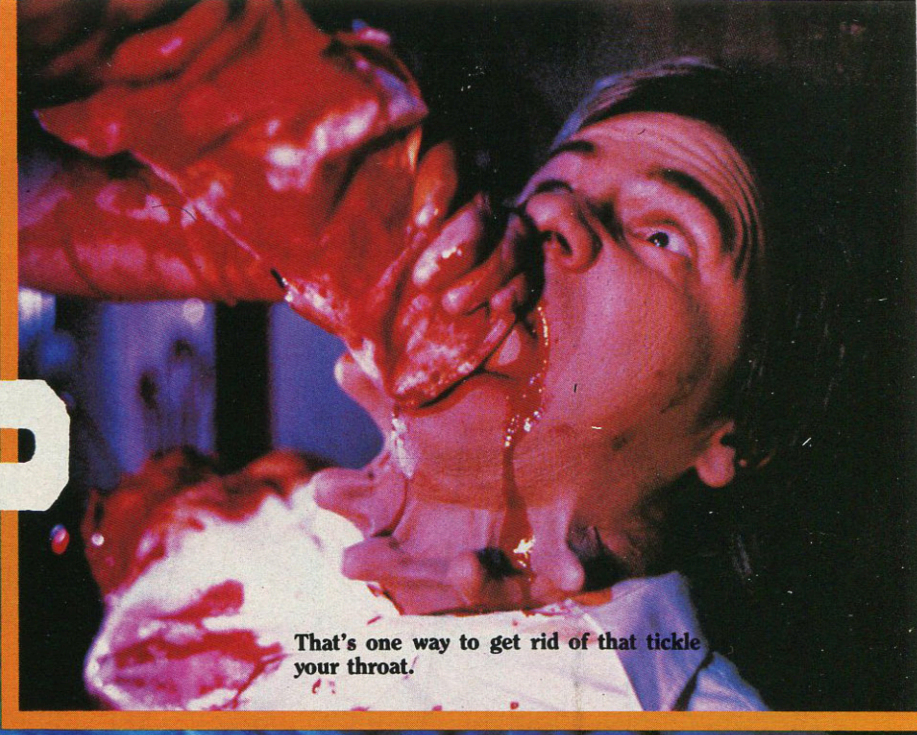
By S.P. SOMTOW

S.P. Somtow wears the hats of writer, director, executive producer, actor and composer on *The Laughing Dead*. However, he had nothing to do with the catering.



> ***"Soon everyone was ready to kill me, because my script was about warm tropical nights and the real temperature was below freezing."***

DEAD

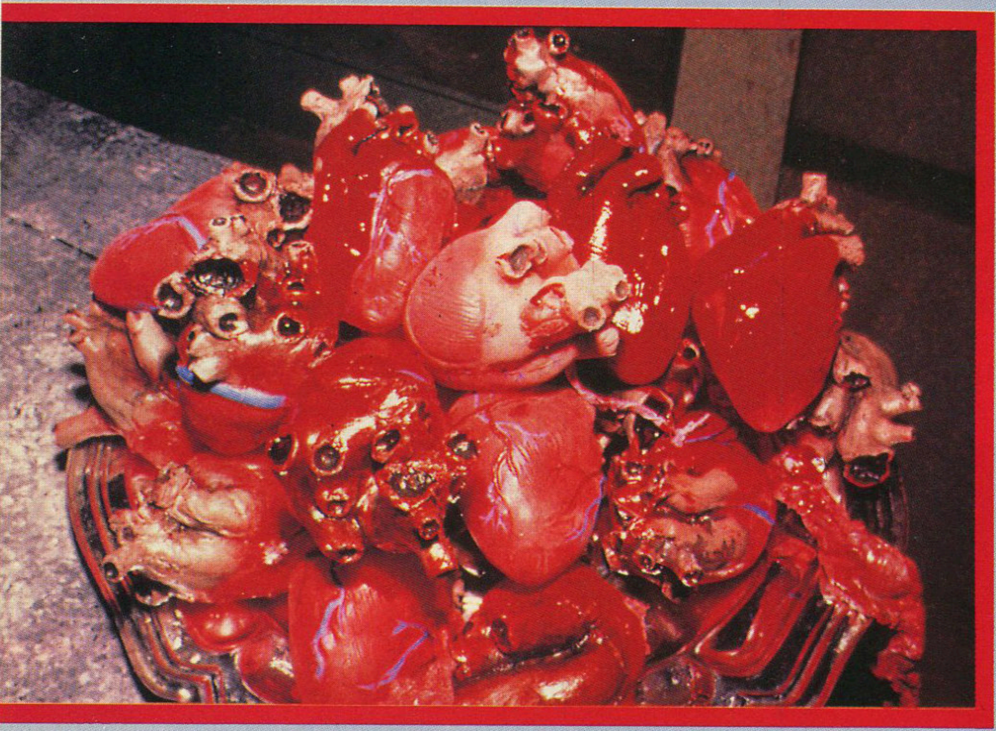


That's one way to get rid of that tickle your throat.

Not that I'm superstitious, but every seven years, I seem to change careers. My first was as an avant garde composer, my second a science-fiction, fantasy and finally horror novelist. The third seven-year stretch was coming up, so I showed up in Hollywood a year and a half ago with a vague notion of doing something in film. I took meetings, jacuzzed with grim determination, and flashed my fake Rolex watch at all the right people, but no new career emerged. One day, I read in *Twilight Zone* magazine that I was one of the ancestors of the literary splatterpunk movement. A number of other "ancestors" were mentioned, but they were all either twice my age or dead. I began to feel like a has-been. Then, one day in June 1988, it all changed.

Nine months later, much to my own astonishment, I looked on as my first film, *The Laughing Dead*, screened for a crowd of avid genre fans. They laughed at the jokes (most of them), applauded the gore and seemed to have a pretty good time. It wasn't *Ben Hur II*, but we had done what 90 percent of those who come to Hollywood never quite seem to manage: We had actually *finished* a movie.

This all started in a shopping mall. I was standing in line waiting to see a sneak preview of *Harry and the Hendersons*. I got into conversation with the man in front of me, who turned out to be makeup FX artist John Buechler. A day or two later, John called. "My production manager's a big fan of your book



Next time you complain when your church's collection basket comes around, think about what the Mayans expect for donations.

Photos: Abe Perlstein/Copyright 1989 Archaeopteryx Corp.

Vampire Junction," he said, and invited me down to his studio to look at all his toys. Then he asked me to write a script for him to direct (a project we've been working on, on and off, ever since).

Lex Nakashima was the next person to show up. He was a young producer who had developed a number of large-scale fantasy projects, and an old friend. "We have to gain credibility in this town," I said. "We have to make a movie—no matter how small-scale—so that we can gain the clout to raise money for the huge projects we've both been dreaming about. A horror movie would be nice."

"Can we set it in Oaxaca?" Lex asked.

I thought about it. Oaxaca, Mexico, is the home of the festival of the laughing dead, a strange blend of Catholicism and pre-Columbian religions—people dressed as skeletons dancing through the streets, celebrants feasting over the graves of their ancestors. "Sure," I decided. "I can write that." My mind was racing wildly, trying to figure out a plot.

"Fine," said Lex, "I'll get a second mortgage on my house. You'll be the executive producer, and I'll produce." At his best, Lex is one of the most decisive people I know.

Lex went to a New Age bookstore in Santa Monica and came back with a couple hundred dollars' worth of books about the culture of the ancient Mayans, and in a few weeks' time, I had the beginnings of a viable story. I wanted to have a lot of spectacle, I wanted a lot of black humor, and I wanted colorful, imaginative gore that would really appeal to the Fango/GOREZONE crowd. Could we really do it on $250,000? Probably not, I told myself, although I did not then envision that the budget would eventually reach seven figures.

This, we decided, was to be a film put together entirely by networking, just like in those old Judy Garland movies where the kids say, "I've got a barn, let's put on a show." Who did I know who might be able to act, if I made sure the parts were tailor-made for them?

The first person I called was the man with whom I used to share a house when I lived on the East Coast: writer, raconteur and madman Tim Sullivan. Beside being a very fine writer of everything from elegant horror to "*V*" novels, Tim Sullivan had just done a bit of acting, a PBS thing in his native Philadelphia. I was thinking of Tim for the role of a Catholic priest who, tormented by guilt over having seduced a nun 12 years before, turns into a crazed killer when possessed by Um-Tzec, the Mayan death god. Tim had wanted to be a monster since childhood. Although he was a little surprised at being asked to drop everything he was doing, fly out from Philadelphia and act, he was used to my eccentricities. He was the first person (aside from Lex) to actually believe there might be something to my claim that we were about to make a movie. Two months later, he was on my doorstep, suitcase in hand, making the sign of the cross at my neighbors.

Many of my friends are writers, so we soon had several well known ones roped in for cameos, everyone from science-fiction author Ed Bryant (whose head gets crushed by a bus in the film) to longtime collector and fan Forry Ackerman, who does a charming little turn as a corpse. As other scribes ranging from Tim (*The Anubis Gates*) Powers to film critic Bill Warren began volunteering to die horribly, I realized that we had a pretty good gimmick going.

But who could direct the film? I thought of another friend, Wendy Ikeguchi, who had been an assistant director on projects as varied as *Wisdom* and *The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd*. Would she care to direct? I inquired, knowing full well that although I had conceived the story and already mentally cast it, I didn't at that time know much about the technical aspects of directing. I only knew what I wanted to see on the screen.

On the tiniest of budgets, splatterpunk S.P. Somtow hopes for a cinematic breakthrough—or, at the very least, the opportunity to make more movies.

The possessed Father Zeke prepares to sacrifice his son.

Greg Frost, another fantasy writer, gave his left arm to appear in *The Laughing Dead*.

> **“I shouldn’t have attempted to portray a god without making the appropriate blood sacrifice; now that my foot was bleeding, everything would be OK.”**

“Direct it yourself,” Wendy told me.

I didn’t quite trust myself yet. I tried to talk Wendy into it for some weeks, but to no avail. She’s a member of the Director’s Guild and, in the final analysis, we couldn’t afford their rates. Instead, she signed on as executive producer and directorial advisor, in which capacity she could tell me what to do—in no uncertain terms. “You’re supposed to say ‘action’ now, Somtow,” she reprimanded me when my mind started wandering one day. We disagreed about many things (in fact, it might be fair to say that we fought like cats and dogs) but her input proved indispensible to the project.

We needed someone to design the production, someone who really understood the tone of the movie, who knew a lot about pre-Columbian cultures, and who wouldn’t be fazed at the number and variety of sets needed in *The Laughing Dead*: the Mayan temple interior, the labyrinthine caves, seedy hotel lobbies and scenes of macabre revelry. Ryan Effner, a former roommate of mine who worked for *Freddy’s Nightmares* as, among other things, a maker of Freddy gloves, introduced me to Philip Vasels and Diane Hughes. “When Ryan told me what the movie was called,”

Rik Carter's "basketball zombies" prepare to take on the Harlem Globetrotters.

Philip later confided, "I thought, 'Oh no, one of *those* movies.' But after I read the script, I realized there was a lot more to it." I knew we had hired the right people when one day Philip called to tell me, "I don't dare go into that inner room. I'm too scared."

He meant the inner chamber of Dr. Um-Tzeck's office, the scene of a demonic possession and a kinky, bloody heart exchange sequence, the dark midpoint of the film. What transpires in the room is the hinge, the corrupt center of the entire story. It's a metaphor for the equation of sex with death. When I learned how disturbed Philip was by the meaning of the room, I knew we were on the same wavelength. Despite the flashiness of some of the other sets, the Dr. Um-Tzec "suite"—the death god's office and the inner room—is Vasels and Hughes' most inspired creation.

After John Buechler came on board, the movie really began to gel. Buechler's name was well known enough in the horror/fantasy field to lend us the clout to draw in many other figures. I was deeply moved when John offered to do the creature transformations and the makeup FX for *The Laughing Dead*. I hadn't dared ask him, because—even though our budget had, by then, tripled—I considered him, with all his credits, too exalted a figure to want to take part in our little venture. "I'm intrigued by the script," he said. "It's disturbing, and it's funny." He then proceeded to make us an offer we couldn't refuse. Buechler also talked me into playing the somewhat-more-than-a-cameo role of the evil Dr. Um-Tzec. "Why, Somtow," he kept saying, "it's you. Can't you see that?" Rik Carter signed on to do the rest of the makeup FX, in particular an arm-down-the-throat gag that became one of the show's highlights.

Two weeks before we were scheduled to start shooting on location in Arizona, we acquired our director of photography, David Boyd. Again, I felt fortunate to have found someone so sympathetic with my vision. The quirky neo-Expressionist angles, the Mario Bavaesque lighting, the painterly composition of his shots often provide an ironic undertone to the black comedy.

Thanksgiving came and went. We were on our way to Old Tucson for the most gruelling 19 days of my life, some days with as many as 52 setups. The Arizona portion of the shoot had a party atmosphere despite the peculiar working conditions. Two other films were being shot on the same location, including *Speed Zone*, so Robert Shelton, who runs Old Tucson, was juggling as fast as he could. One day we shared the set with more than 1,000 high school students who were having a banquet, and I prayed that the sound of distant cheerleading choruses could somehow be disguised, in the audio mix, as the sound of crickets or birds through the use of clever signal processing.

On the opening day, I was in my Um-Tzec regalia atop a towering mountain and about to plunge a knife into my hapless niece Vanina, who was playing Victim #1. I couldn't see a thing without my glasses, and I was trying to walk downhill toward Wendy Ikeguchi, whose blurry form was waving frantically in the distance. I took a Chaplinesque tumble, sprained my ankle, and thought that all was lost until my mother (who taught me everything I know about horror, and who was working with us as a production supervisor) explained to me that I shouldn't have attempted to portray a god without making the appropriate blood sacrifice; now that my foot was bleeding onto the earth, everything would be OK. I limped away, wondering if I'd be completely useless for the rest of the shoot.

Soon everyone was ready to kill me, because my script was about warm tropical nights and the real temperature in Tucson in the middle of the night was below freezing. Timson Hill and John-Anthoni, who played Dr. Um-Tzec's evil acolytes, suffered in particular, as they stood in their skimpy costumes in the biting desert wind. One of the key FX—the crushing of Ed Bryant's head under the wheels of a bus—didn't come off the first time; the blood balloons failed to burst. I heard Wendy Ikeguchi cry out, "Where's the blood, where's the blood?" and we all rushed over to find that the head had been squashed flat. Was it ruined? We watched in astonishment as the head popped right back into shape the minute the bus pulled away. No one had ever dreamed that the head would be reusable.

We didn't sleep much. We ate gargantuan portions of steak at the Pack 'Em In Steak House across the street from our motel, and a week later we were ready to return to Los Angeles, where the Vasels and Hughes team had been wildly constructing sets in our absence. More spectacle was to come: Ryan Effner's and my turning into monsters, the nasty Caesarean section dream sequence, the hotel lobby sequence in which Father O'Sullivan goes crazy and spatters the wall with women's brains, and the climax, a recreation of the Mayan ballgame of death replete with zombies, dinosaur battle, a collapsing temple a la *Last Days of Pompeii* and an exploding hotel.

"Another reason I'm doing this for you," John Buechler told me, "is that I've never seen anyone attempt so much with so little money!"

Since the film wrapped, I have been frequently asked whether I would ever do it again. At first, my answer was always a resounding "No!" Lately, though, I've started to forget the pain . .

Composer and splatterpunk S.P. Somtow (Somtow Sucharitkul) is the author of 17 novels. Tor will publish his next book, the werewolf Western Moon Dance, *in October.*

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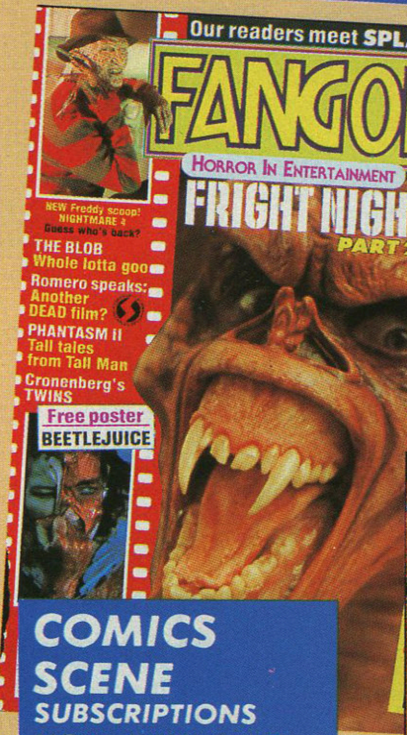

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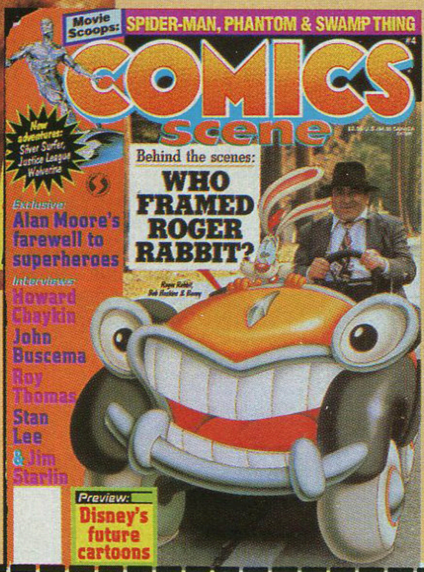

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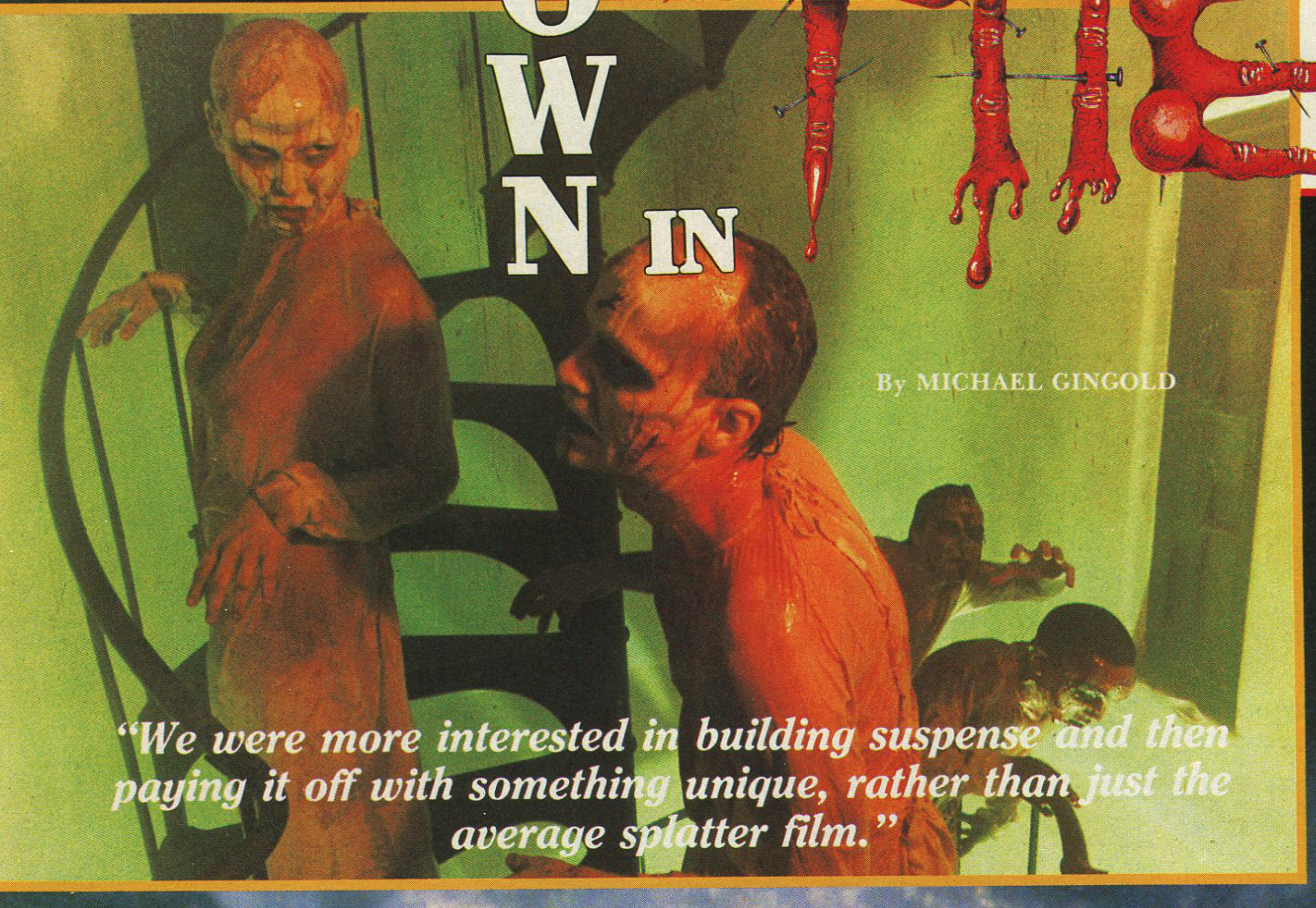
DOWN IN THE

It's ladies first as the zombies make their ascent from *The Dead Pit*.



By MICHAEL GINGOLD

> *"We were more interested in building suspense and then paying it off with something unique, rather than just the average splatter film."*

PREVIEW

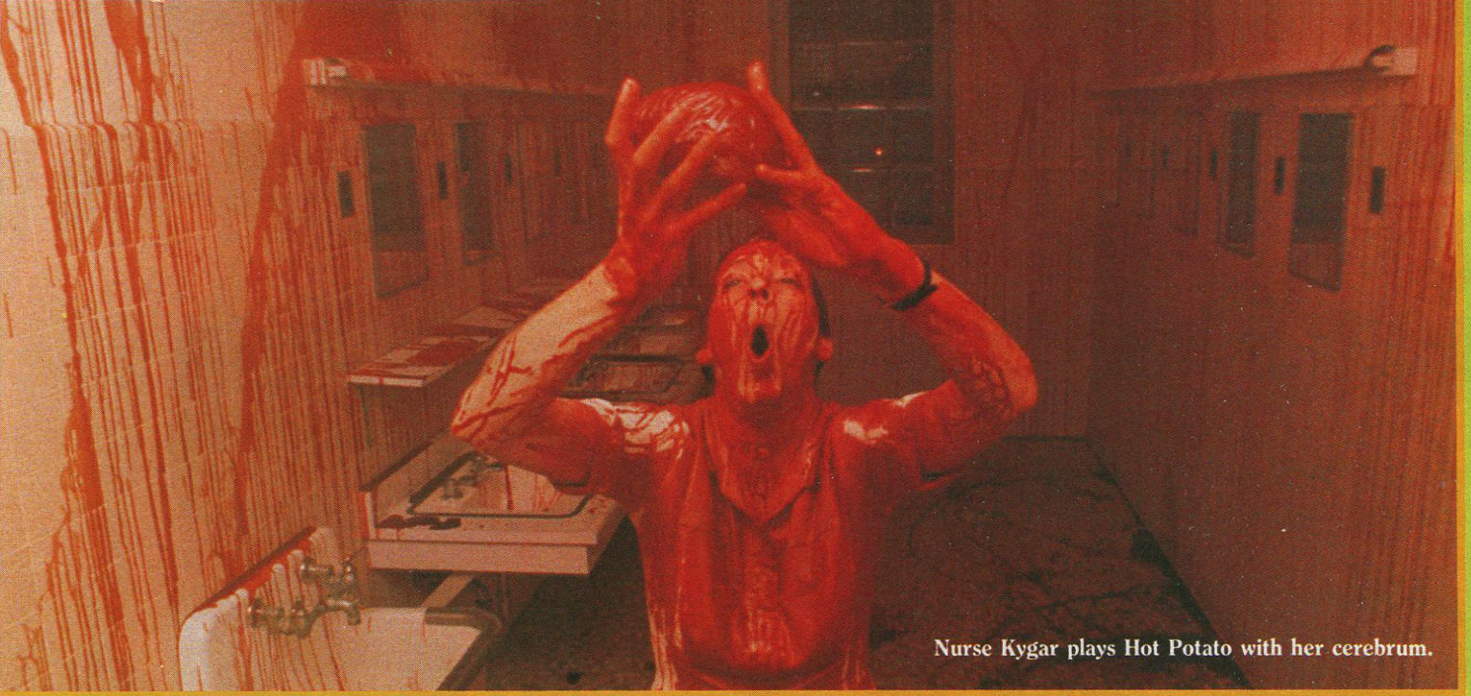
The evil Dr. Ramzi offers a piece of his mind.

DEAD PIT

"I like to call it '*Night of the Living Dead* by way of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*,'" says director/co-writer Brett Leonard of his film *The Dead Pit*. "In fact, the hospital where we shot the film, Agnew's Developmental Center, happens to be the place Ken Kesey based *Cuckoo's Nest* on."

If you thought Jack Nicholson was crazy in that film, consider Dr. Colin Ramzi, *The Dead Pit*'s villain. In the bowels of the State Institute for the Mentally Ill, Dr. Ramzi has been using lobotomized patients for his own very unorthodox practices. Once he's finished with them, he throws them into the

It takes a lot of brains to make a good splatter film.



Nurse Kygar plays Hot Potato with her cerebrum.

Photos: Gary Ruble

formaldehyde-filled chamber of the title, until administrator Dr. Gerald Swan gets wind of his activities. Dr. Swan kills Dr. Ramzi and seals him up in the pit forever. . . or so he thinks.

Leonard takes up the tale from there. "We cut to the present, 20 years later, and a woman appears who calls herself Jane Doe, because she has amnesia. She starts having visions of Dr. Ramzi, who taunts her in the corridors of the asylum. An earthquake occurs when she arrives on the scene, and it cracks open the seal Dr. Swan had put on the Dead Pit chamber. So we don't know if what she's seeing is her imagination or whether the spirit of Dr. Ramzi has come back to haunt the asylum."

Bet on the latter. Soon the undead results of Ramzi's experiments start coming back as well, ripping the brains out of various victims. "Not to eat them, like in traditional 'dead' movies," says Leonard, "but because they worship brains, since they're mental patients."

Not only is Agnew's Developmental the key shooting site for the film, it was actually the project's inspiration. After making some award-winning feature-length films in Super-8 (including a horror item called *The Filer*), Leonard made a pair of 35mm shorts before the hospital became the muse for his first feature. "The entire film was based on the location," he reveals. "It is now, as in the film, half-abandoned. We went into buildings that had been empty for 20 years, where mental patients had been housed. It's actually one of the greatest locations I've ever seen, a horror film waiting to happen." In fact, only one set had to be built—the Dead Pit chamber itself. This allowed Leonard and producer/co-writer Gimel Everett to take full advantage of the extant atmosphere. "We utilized the location's design to the lighting requirements, to give it a neo-Gothic look. The film's got a real striking visual design, using the natural things the location offered."

In fact, on at least one unnerving occasion, the filmmakers found life imitating art a little too closely in an incident following the shooting of the movie's earthquake scene. "We shot the scene, and went back to the hotel to sleep," Leonard recounts. "And as soon as we arrived back on the set the next day, a 6.1 earthquake epicentered directly where we were. The funny thing was that the building we were in had been destroyed in the 1906 earthquake, killing about 300 mental patients—there were almost as many casualties there as in the rest of San Francisco—and we found out that the victims of that earthquake were put in a mass grave right on the site, which was similar to the pit in our film. That was pretty scary."

The same description has been applied to the film itself by people who have seen it at film markets, and no small credit for the movie's frights should go to FX director Ed Martinez. Among other projects, Martinez worked with Rick Baker on Japan's Horror Film SPFX Expo before taking on the challenge of doing *The Dead Pit*'s many FX on a low budget. His work included pyrotechnics and model work as well as gruesome gore, and Leonard recalls that at one point Martinez was making up 50 or 60 zombies at a time.

Unlike many independent horror directors, however, Leonard does not foresee problems with the MPAA. He feels certain that *The Dead Pit* will get an R the first time around. "It's not as gorily violent as something like *Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*," he says, recalling one of the last major films to go out unrated. "It's not based on that kind of gore, it's based more on very specific kinds of effects with a lot of tension and suspense. We were more interested in building that suspense and then paying it off with something unique, rather than just the average splatter film."

That difference is important, he feels, in getting a low-budget horror film in the marketplace these days. "Times are tough for independent horror movies," Leonard says, "but if you have a good film that has suspense and good performances and is not based solely on the gore moments, you're able to find distributors who will recognize that." *The Dead Pit* was picked up for overseas distribution by Skouras Pictures, who have handled everything from *Blood Simple* to *My Life as a Dog*, and Leonard is in negotiation for a domestic deal that should have the movie into theaters in time for Halloween. Beyond that, Leonard plans to make his next film a psychological thriller, "though there are many things about it that are akin to the horror genre, and the visual style will be very similar." He doesn't foresee himself making "a series of low-budget horror films," but he does want to do a SF/horror movie with a larger budget, and is not an apologist for the genre.

"I love the horror genre in the sense that you're able, as a filmmaker, to show your visual style and do things you can't in, say, a contemporary drama or a light comedy," Leonard concludes. "We put everything we love about horror movies into *The Dead Pit*. It's a quintessential horror film."

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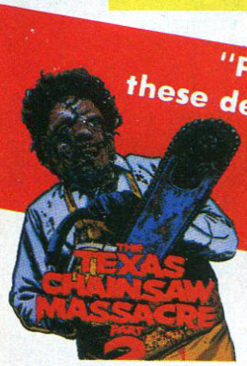
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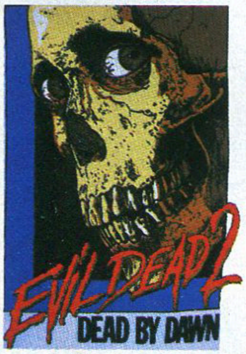
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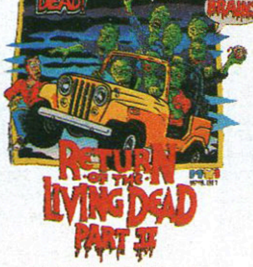
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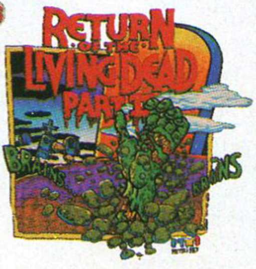
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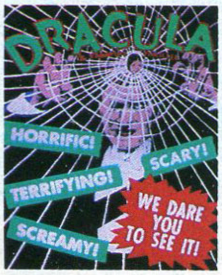
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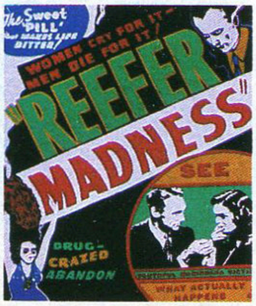
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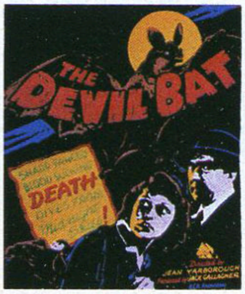
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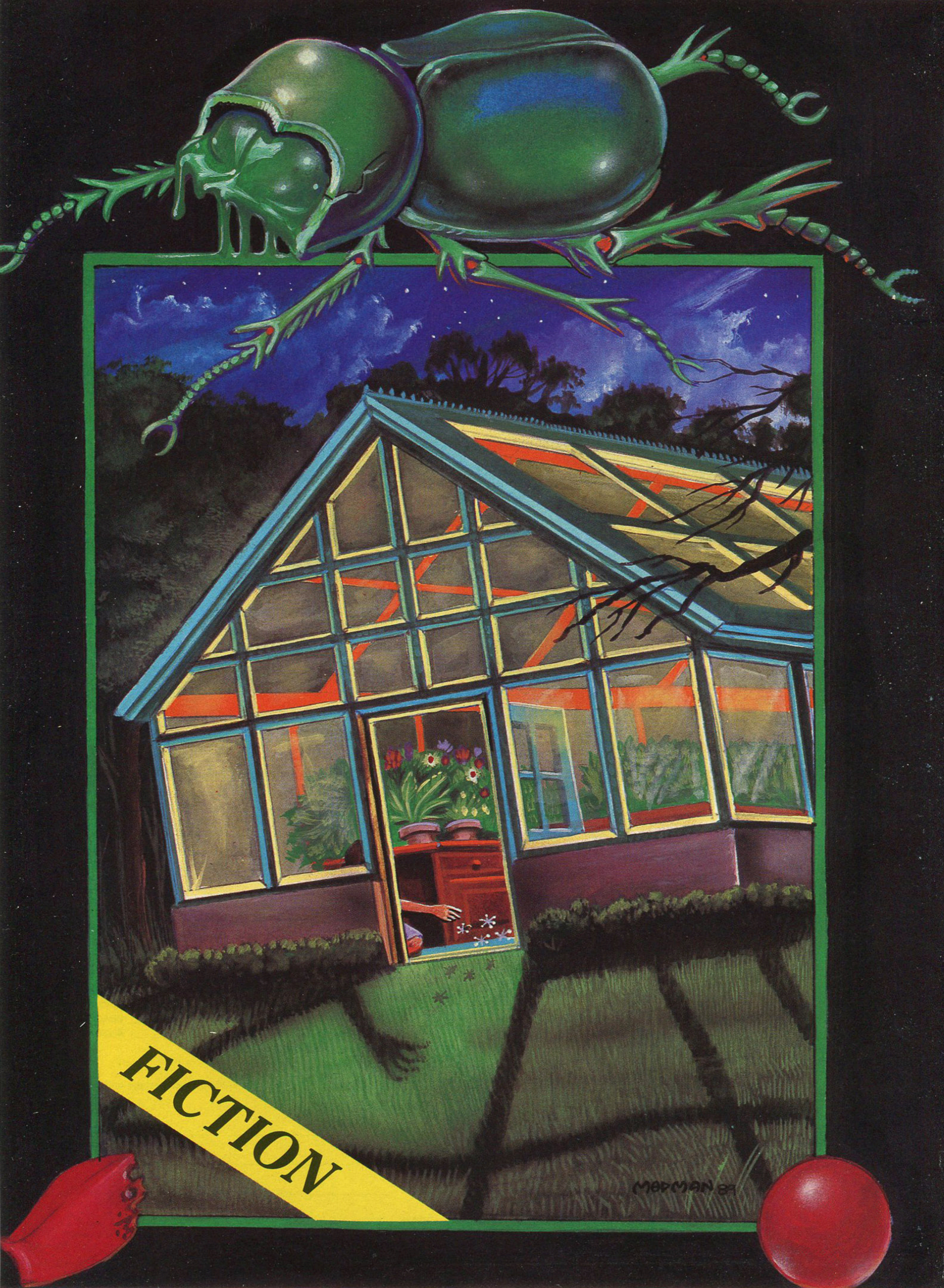
FICTION
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JACKS

By J.N. WILLIAMSON

She sat just so with her pale, slender legs tucked beneath her, dropping the tiny red ball again and again, then snatching up silver jacks with sure, sudden movements. Her hand was reptilian in its quickness. It had required practice to get this good. It was what she did best.

"Kisses." She whispered the word to no one in particular, then separated the two jacks that had clutched one another as if hugging. Hugging with arms as well as silvery legs. She bounced the ball, darted out her hand once more as if it were a tongue extruding from her mouth to mock the world, and began to prepare. This was awful hard, gettin' all ten of them at once, and sometimes the tendons in her hand hurt after she had played the game for hours. She gathered up seven, eight—*nine* jacks—

But the tenth eluded her outflung hand. It curled back in on itself like a snake recoiling, a tongue being sucked back between two puckered lips. "Crickets," she swore, but soundlessly, never willing to let anyone hear her. No sound came from her mouth beyond a faint exhalation of breath.

> **Trickles of thin green liquid worked their way down her fingers as she lifted what remained of the aggressor toward her open mouth.**

To rest, she leaned back for a moment. Jacks wasn't really what she wanted to do, even if it was a swell game. She raised her head and eyes to gaze discreetly, wistfully, toward the open door of her bedroom. From there she could just make out the place Mother called the greenhouse. The tempting, seductive, beautiful greenhouse across the hall, where Mother would not let her go to play, ever, because it "kept body and soul together, yours and mine," Mother always said. As if she wanted to remind herself, too. "It's what feeds us."

So what? Her thinly lashed brown eyes scanned the flowers she was able to identify from where she sat in her ladylike posture. Orchids and roses and glads and mums and lillies, she knew the names of them all without needing to boast of the fact, she loved the blaze of dazzlingly vivid color that swayed as a breeze whispered through the silent greenhouse, swayed as if in unison, as if seeking to create music. And someday, perhaps, she'd even be able to hear their song if she stayed quiet long enough.

Why did Mother keep her from going in there? She didn't want to harm the flowery chorus. She wanted to hurt the bugs, those nasty bugs that ate at the roses like things devouring the sun, nibbled at the glads and mums until their heads drooped listlessly in sunstream and their song stayed mute forever.

She wanted to do awful things to those bugs, and sighed. Time was, she remembered, Mother had not been that strict. Back when Janey and Leanda and Margaret were there to play with her. Now she couldn't remember the faces of all the other children. Was it Margaret who had bangs and lied gloriously without a trace of deception showing in those frank blue eyes? Or was that Janey?

No. No, Janey was redheaded and had a limp. One leg had been just a little shorter than the other one, as if it were modest and hadn't wanted to keep up. She couldn't remember Leanda, with her golden curls and disposition; beyond that simple description, poor Leanda was gone from memory forever, faceless as orchids—or mums, when the bugs had eaten their faces. Why would no one come back to play?

Her temper was almost gone and that wouldn't do. She had seen what happened when tempers were lost and it was worse than faces being devoured because it hurt, bad. Carefully, silently, she slid the silver jacks into the pocket of her skirts, stood, and smoothed the skirt down. Mother was downstairs talking with nosy Mrs. August. Aged ancient crinkly bad Mrs. August whose voice fluted up the steps with Mother's, descended and fluttered back up again like it was as stubborn as the hag. Well, crickets. Mother wouldn't *know* if she did it, if a few damn old bugs got what was comin' to them!

(continued on page 56)

FICTION
MADMAN
89

Clam Bake at Opaque Lake

By DARREN O. GODFREY

The sun came down hard, causing little Jasmine to blow her cookies. No, really, it was her macaroni and cheese. She wouldn't get around to blowing her cookies for a few days, I think. So, for now she settled for the macaroni and cheese (which obviously didn't settle for *her*). As she gushed this yummy stuff all over Mom's new picnic blanket, Dad said, "Why does she have to eat that, Joyce? Grandpa Jack is kind enough to send us this wonderful seafood all the way from the coast, can't she eat it like the rest of us?"

"No," Mom told him as she quickly moved the picnic basket (which was big enough to hold a cow, and sometimes did) out of the way of the spreading goop. "Jas says seafood is just too slimy."

He got up and walked past me, toward the lake, toward my family. What if I hadn't let him go? What if I'd told him to get lost?

Dad looked at the small doughy tubes swimming in the warm, yellow, oozing cheese. I think he wanted to say something but he didn't.

Then, to finish off in style, Jasmine started up with the dry heaves. The sound she made reminded me of . . . well, the *last* time we were out here. She blew chunks then, too. She always does.

"Jordan, my boy!" Dad cried with a fake smile. "What say we play catch? I've got the ball!"

"Yeah." But I was ready to go home.

We stuck around awhile longer, though. Even managed to eat more food. Dad and I played catch for only about five minutes before he'd said he was going to cramp, so we went back to where Mom and Jas were and I saw that Jas looked a lot better. At first, I thought the blanket did, too, but then I noticed that it had only been flipped over.

"Hey, boys! Have a seat!"

"No thanks, Mom. Think I'll go for a walk or something."

I wandered up to the parking lot in hopes of finding that something. To occupy myself for a few. Frisbees, girls or *any*thing. I was pretty much bored. As far as I was concerned, picnics sucked. They still do.

"Hey, can I get some munchies off you guys?" someone said. It was a guy, a little bit older than me, and fat. He was lying on top of a big white car. A Buick. I thought of beached whales. "I saw you guys down by the lake. You think you could let me have something to eat?"

"Hmmm," I said, eyeballing him. "Do you like regurgitated macaroni?"

"And cheese?"

"Yep."

"My favorite."

"You're kidding, right?" I said. Strange dude.

"Of course. Aren't you?"

"No, we've really *got* regurgitated macaroni and cheese. Thanks to my sister."

"Is that all you brought?"

"Hell, no. We've got clams, oysters, beer. . . the works."

I saw his mouth water. "Think I could get some?"

"I dunno," I shrugged. "Why don't you go ask my dad?"

"Would he mind, do you think?"

I shrugged and turned away. He got up and walked past me, toward the lake, toward my family. What if I hadn't let him go? Would we have gone home then? What if I'd just told him to get lost?

But of course I didn't, and of course he was still there two hours later. We all were. There, next to the lake.

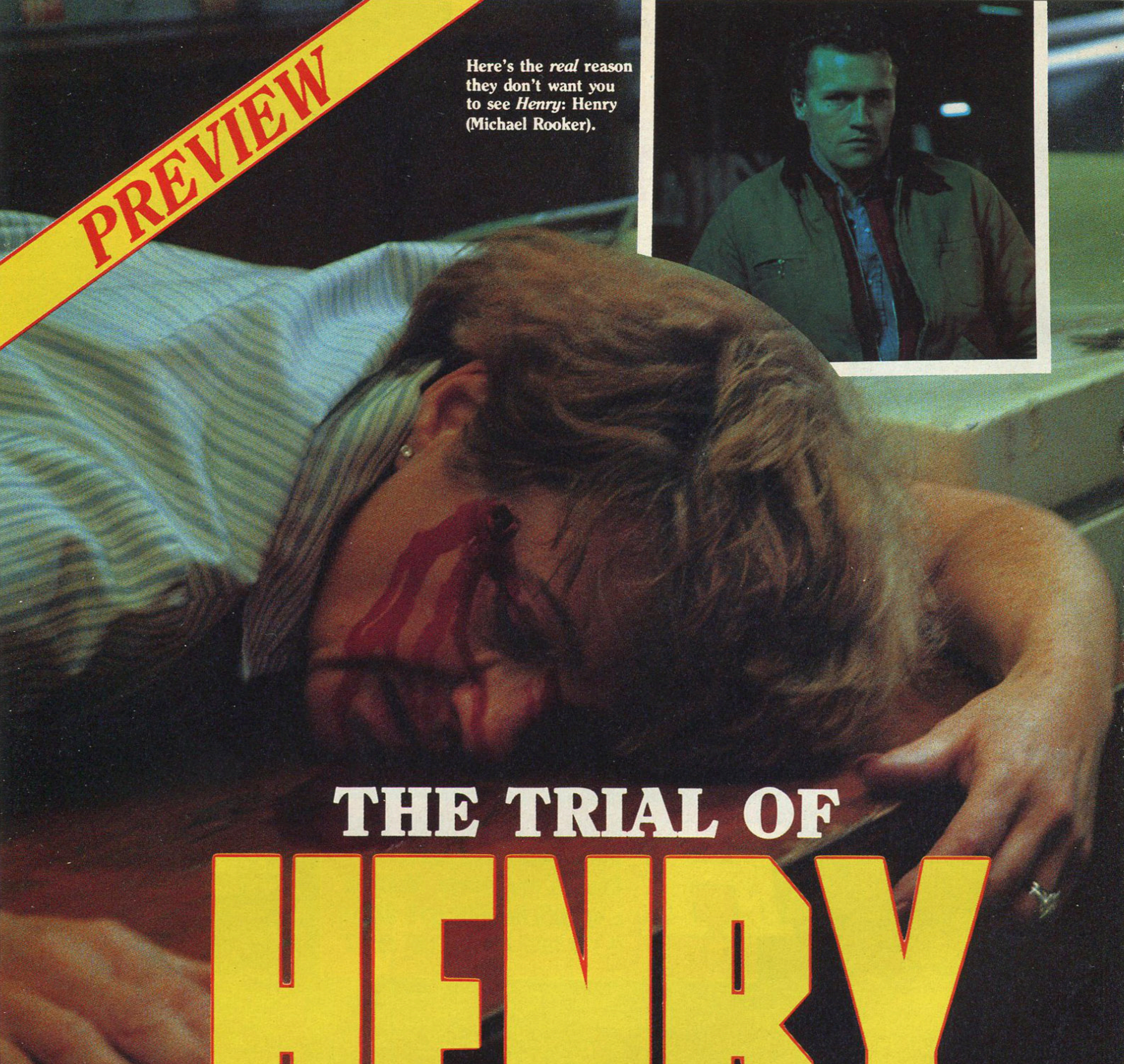
Still eating.

All of us but Jasmine, who was throwing up the football instead of her food. She's a little weird, but she's OK.

Right about the time I started thinking it was a bit late to still be out, the stranger said, "How's about a fire? Let's have a *real* party!"

(continued on page 56)

PREVIEW



Here's the *real* reason they don't want you to see *Henry*: Henry (Michael Rooker).

THE TRIAL OF HENRY

By KIM
HOWARD
JOHNSON

"At least 50 percent of the people who have seen the picture have said, 'I have nightmares about that movie.' "

While director John McNaughton finishes up his second film, *The Borrower* (Fango #84), he is still battling to get his controversial first movie released—but then, *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (see review, page 51) is not a normal movie. Commercial theatrical release has proven next to impossible after the MPAA assigned it an X rating, even though there is surprisingly little violence or nudity in the movie, which utilizes the titular character's point of view.

Why is everyone so afraid of *Henry*?

"It's real," explains McNaughton. "It's totally believable as reality. That's why it's scary. There's nobody from outer space, there are no spirits from beyond the grave. These are real guys walking around real streets, and they could cross your path. It's a very dark movie, but it's very true to itself. There's no compromise. We're all very proud of it, although it's not a pretty sight. There's a

With almost no graphic gore, you would think this was a wimpy movie, huh? And you would be wrong.

Henry Photos: Berndt Rantscheff/MPI

scene that we refer to as 'the Home Invasion'; I think it may be the most disturbing thing I've ever seen in a film."

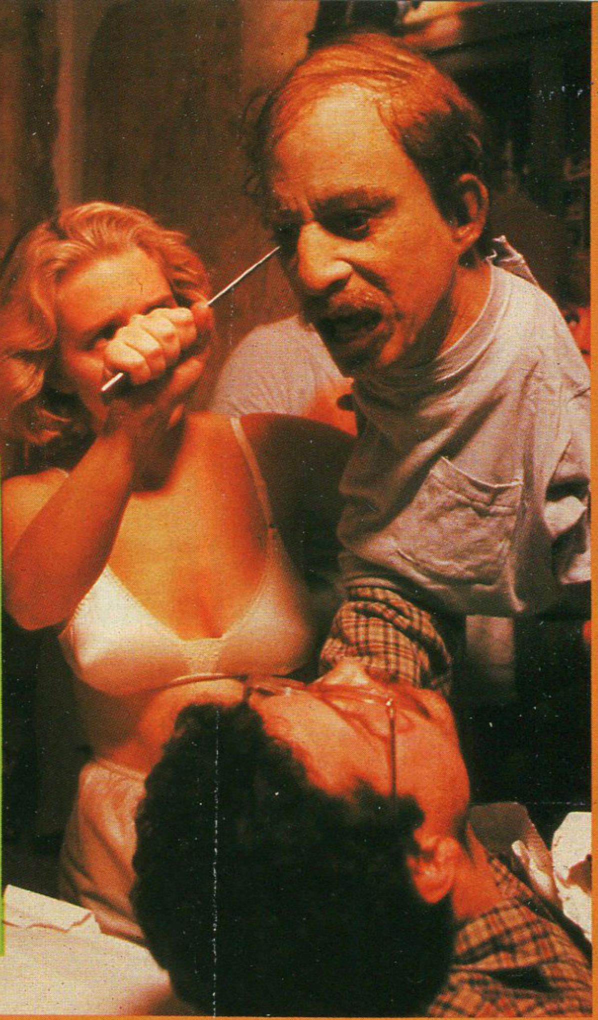
Co-producer Steven A. Jones, who also contributed music for the film, says they've had to contend with the old studio morality dictating that the bad guy must pay for his crimes. "He's still out there at the end of the movie, and that disturbs a lot of people," Jones judges. "They say, 'There are really guys like this out there,' and they get really ticked off about it. That's when I felt we did the job right, when we started getting that kind of response. There's no moral victory at the end. It's dark, it stays dark, and it ends worse."

The script is based very loosely on the story of notorious serial killer Henry Lee Lucas. "It's not true in detail," McNaughton clarifies. "There are some true details in it, but episode per episode

Neither a brainless slashathon nor a gutless softening of real-life tragedy, *Henry* proves we *need* a new MPAA rating.

Photo: Berndt Rantscheff

Remember: You heard about director John McNaughton from us first.



FX Photos: Courtesy Jeff Segal

Once McNaughton's second film *The Borrower* comes out, everyone will want a Tom Towles puppet.

and plot point per plot point, it's fiction."

Henry came about when Waleed B. Ali offered McNaughton $100,000 to make a horror film. "I figured, what kind of effects could we get for that little?" the director recounts. "Richard Fire, who co-scripted, and I both thought, 'Let's redefine and horrify in the most extreme way possible.' And what's the most horrible thing there is? Reality. We happened to see a clip about Henry Lee Lucas on *20/20*. This is the most horrible thing that exists in the world today, that these people are out there wandering, and if you're out there at the wrong time and place, and you run into Henry and Otis—goodbye! It's just random."

Starring Michael (*Mississippi Burning*) Rooker, Tom Towles and Tracy Arnold, *Henry* began production in 1986 and was lensed in 16mm. The film was shot on location in Chicago using many members of the local theater community. Most of the cast and crew worked for virtually no money. The reaction the film has received has been gratifying to all involved. "I've never put that tape on in a room where *anyone* ever walked away, once they saw the first frame," marvels McNaughton. "At least 50 percent of the people who have seen the picture have said, 'I have nightmares about that movie.'

"John Waters has seen the film and is a big fan," the director goes on. "He gave us a quote for our flyers: 'Truly disturbing.' Stuart Gordon saw it when he was in the process of doing one of his pictures and said, 'It looks so much better than the stuff I'm doing for half a million, it's pitiful!' And Richard Pryor said, 'Now I've seen the limit.' "

The X rating is unlikely to change, according to a representative from MPI, which holds the video rights to *Henry*. The company's director of publicity, Chuck Parello, sent the ratings certificate back to the MPAA. So, MPI will release *Henry* unrated. "The MPAA won't tell us what can be cut," McNaughton grimaces. "They won't say, 'Cut these scenes and we'll give you an R.' Richard Shenson of MPI was arguing with the head of the screening committee of the MPAA at one point. He said, 'You have to compare this with other pictures,' and she said, 'There *are* no other pictures like this, Mr. Shenson.' They basically told us this movie is almost impossible to even consider giving less than an X rating, because of its tone and intent."

Without question, *Henry* is incredibly dark and violent. The filmmakers agree it shouldn't be seen by persons under 18. Still, the X or unrated label puts the film in the same class as pornography, prevents its advertisement in most newspapers and on TV, and limits its distribution. "By giving it an X, they've obstructed our right to market it," McNaughton reasons. "It was indeed the X rating that killed our deal with Atlantic, and thus prevented it from being distributed." Noting that he favors a rating system which would distinguish intense, adult films from pornography, the director points out, "There's nothing in *Henry* as graphic as the scene in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* where they rip the heart out."

Currently MPI owns the video distribution rights, and they are hoping for a grass roots campaign of midnight screenings in major cities (*Henry* has already played New York City and Chicago film festivals) to garner as much press as possible, and then to fanzines to launch an awareness campaign. McNaughton reports plans for a TV campaign as well. No one knows whether any cable service would want to show it.

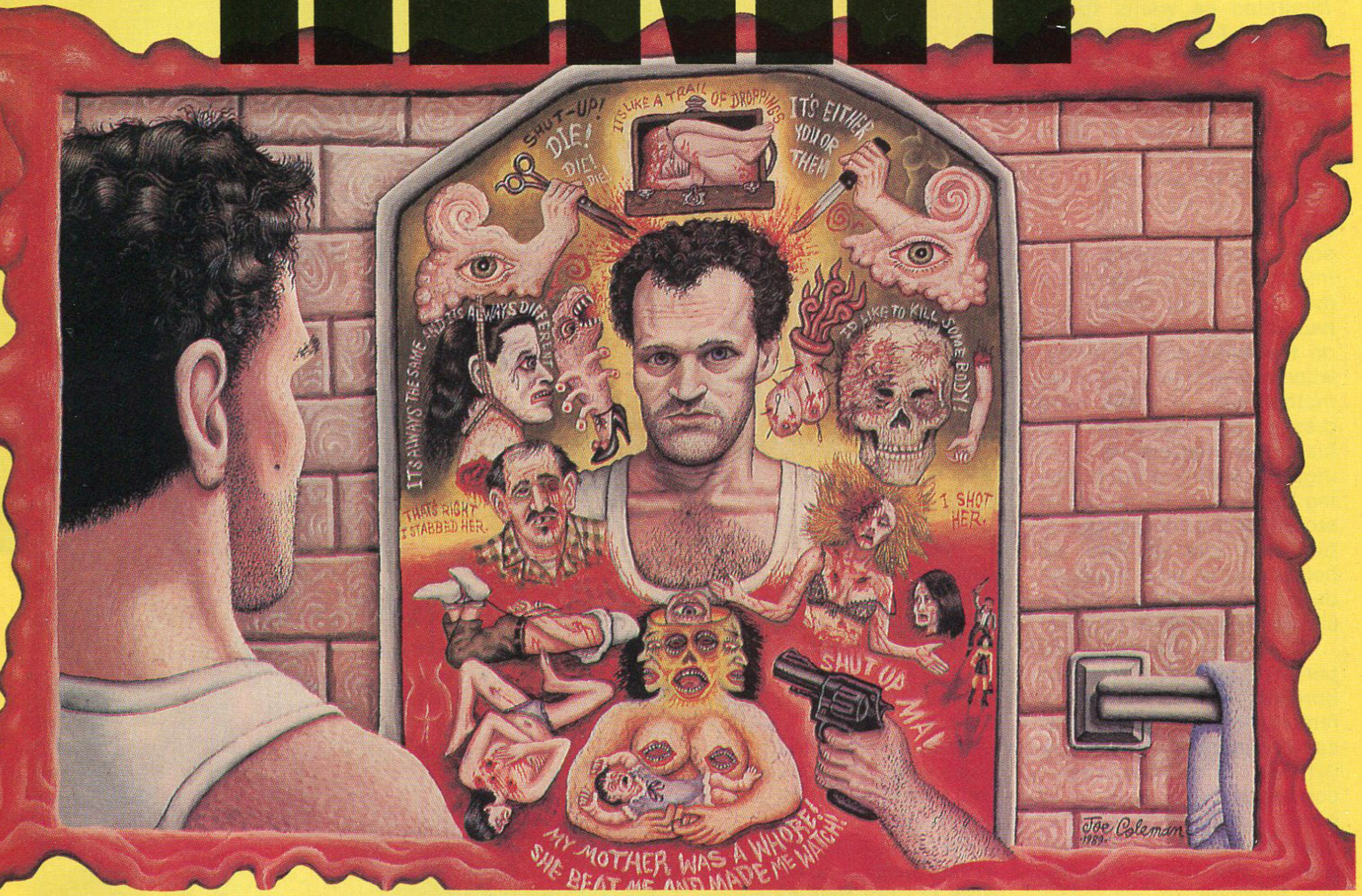
Barring any changes in thinking, however, *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* may well be the most frightening movie never seen. John McNaughton regards it with justifiable pride. "As far as our intent, which was to horrify, *Henry* was 100 percent successful," he concludes. "It's a really good picture, and it deserves to be seen. It's just a shame that it's gone through all this misery."

REVIEW

HENRY

By MAITLAND McDONAGH

Art: Joe Coleman


SHUT-UP! DIE! DIE! DIE!
IT'S LIKE A TRAIL OF DROPPINGS
IT'S EITHER YOU OR THEM
IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME, AND IT'S ALWAYS DIFFERENT
I'D LIKE TO KILL SOMEBODY!
THAT'S RIGHT I STABBED HER.
I SHOT HER.
SHUT UP MA!
MY MOTHER WAS A WHORE! SHE BEAT ME AND MADE ME WATCH!
Joe Coleman 1989

"Portrait of a Serial Killer"

". . . a remorseless voyeurism that can encompass a landscape littered with corpses . . . without flinching or rendering judgment."

The MPAA doesn't want you to see this movie. Now, the MPAA doesn't want you to see *parts* of lots of movies: naughty parts, gory parts, particularly vivid nasty parts, so they send them back to the filmmakers with suggested cuts that, if made, will ensure a commercially desirable R rating. But that's not what they've done with *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*, John McNaughton's ultralow-budget first feature. *Henry* has been denied an R and the MPAA doesn't have a thing to say about how that situation might be remedied, which is a fairly remarkable thing. Granted, the suggestion of cutting reels three through five out of *Re-Animator* wasn't what Stuart Gordon wanted to hear (and isn't what he did, either), but at least it was a *suggestion*.

Everybody—at least everybody who counts—loves a good serial killer story, and *Henry* tells one. Young Becky, fleeing a failed marriage, leaves little daughter Lurlene with her mother and moves to Chicago to stay with her shiftless brother Otis (Tom Towles) while she figures out what to do with her life. Otis has a roommate, Henry (Michael Rooker), an old prison buddy whose claim to fame is having murdered his mother. Even after he tells the disingenuously inquisitive Becky ("Did you really kill your mama?") it's true, she can't believe stolid

Henry with the wounded eyes is a cold-blooded killer. She figures him for a man who's been dealt some crippling blow by life, ripe for redemption through the love of a good woman.

Henry's among the walking wounded, there's no doubt about that, but he's a lot further gone than he seems. When he gets so frustrated he wants to kill someone, he goes ahead and does just that. He shares his unorthodox stress management techniques with Otis, and then the two of them troll the highways together to kill and kill and kill.

Henry is trailed by the reverb voices that taunt and scream before fading back into the ambient soundtrack (but he ignores them) and haunted by a past that's just on the awful side of funny; when he starts to tell how his mother was a whore who dressed him like a girl and his father had no legs, the urge to laugh comes bubbling up in your throat. What stops it is the horrible sensation that this all has the hollow ring of grim truth. All does not end well, as no one should be surprised to hear.

What gives *Henry* its icy punch is a detachment that borders on catatonia, a remorseless voyeurism that can encompass a landscape littered with corpses—corpses in rivers, corpses in motel rooms, corpses in liquor stores, corpses of men, women and children—without flinching or rendering judgment, no doubt a large part of the overall problem of tone and attitude reported to have dismayed the MPAA. *Henry* can't be accused of revelling in the aesthetic act of murder. It's no Argento *opera violenta*, all saturated light and deliriously off-kilter camera angles; no *Friday the 13th* clone counting up 50 ways to kill your lover, each more murderously imaginative than the one before; no *Nightmare on Elm Street*, built around lunatic grandstanding. *Henry*'s murders are nothing to slobber over. They're mostly aftermath, and there's not much on display in the way of high-voltage psychopathy.

Henry Photos: Berndt Rantscheff/MPI

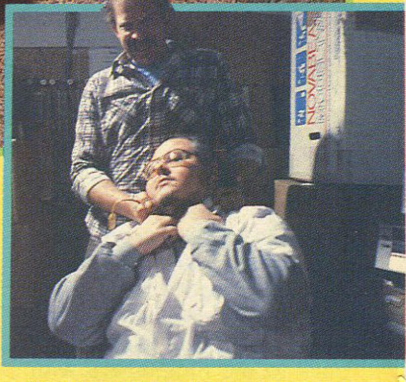
If Henry marries Becky, Otis (Tom Towles) will *not* be best man.

Henry (Michael Rooker) and Becky (Tracy Arnold) make a doomed attempt at an almost normal relationship.

It proceeds from the notion there's a terrible void out there in America's heartland, and, well...you might as well look, it's pretty interesting.

To make it all that much worse, *Henry* is no demented work of utter fiction, sprung full-blown from the mind of a perverted degenerate moviemaker. Following in a long and dishonorable tradition, McNaughton drew his inspiration from life, specifically from the misbegotten life of one-man white trash death squad Henry Lee Lucas, now on death row in Huntsville, Texas, convicted of 11 murders and suspected of more than 150. The movie's body count is modest by comparison—a mere 15—but McNaughton makes them count. The thinly fictionalized Lucas story is chilling, from the opening shot of a corpse on a patch of grass to the closing shot of a corpse in a suitcase.

Unless your local theater has an enlightened booking policy that leaves room for some cult screenings, you're probably going to have to see *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* on tape from MPI. *Do it.* It's worth the effort. And look out for McNaughton's *The Borrower.* Talent like this should be encouraged.



Never mind writing to the Better Business Bureau, Otis wants his complaint heard *now*.

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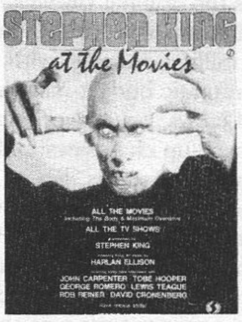
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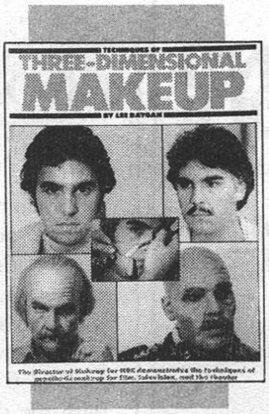
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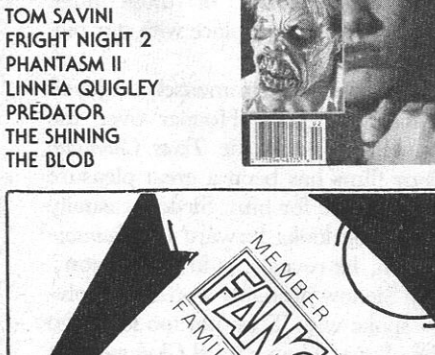
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COOK

(continued from page 17)

filmmaker Siedow once knew? Not a chance, according to the actor. "To me, Tobe hadn't changed at all. He was the same guy, a very, very nice fella."

Whereas the original *Chainsaw* landed in the can for under $100,000, the sequel had $4.6 million to play with. Along with the dramatic budget increase came Hollywood crews, better working conditions, 40 back-up chainsaws and screen great Dennis Hopper as Texas Ranger "Lefty" Enright. When asked how he got along with the legendary Hopper, Siedow simply notes, "Fine. During the whole thing, Dennis was a withdrawn fellow. He wasn't outgoing or anything, just a nice quiet guy."

Although working conditions were much better for Siedow on the second *Chainsaw*, production sometimes became very intense. "At times, things got to be rushed," Siedow frowns. "The script wasn't finished when we started. Kit Carson, the writer, is a great guy. He just kept writing. But that was the thing, more and more things kept being thrown at me just two hours before filming started, and boy, that was rough."

Siedow was a real trouper during *Chainsaw 2*'s two and a half months of principal photography. He was present from the first day of shooting to the last scene on July 4, 1986. Siedow even got his chance to shed a little blood for the cause on one of the more demanding days. "After the scene when Enright hits me in the rear with the chainsaw, that's the stunt double," he specifies. "I turn around and he starts the saw, I offer him the money, then he touches me with that thing. They told Dennis to just touch me on the hip with the chainsaw running, then they'd take over with the stunt doubles and stuff. I said, 'You mean he's gonna *touch* me while that thing's running?!' 'Don't worry,' they said, 'there's no teeth in it.' 'Yeah, but the steel band's going,' I told them. They said, 'Don't worry, there's nothing to worry about.' I even asked one of the stunt doubles if I needed a pad or something, and he said, 'No, don't worry about it.' So we started going, and he touched me for a second with that damned running band, and the next thing I know, my coveralls are covered with blood! It only got me a little bit. It could have been *really* tragic!"

The sequel's new offerings included an all-new, dynamic homestead for the boys, set in the bowels of a long-abandoned roadside amusement park. The interior featured a blitzkrieg of skeletal structures set in and around Christmas lights, with the remains of past victims lining every square inch. In spite of the colossal number of additions to the cannibal abode, Siedow walked in and noticed the absence of one significant item. "I told Tobe the set looked just great, but what it was missing was that chicken," he recounts. "So Tobe got two of 'em in there, but they had to be cut out when we remembered how bad the first *Chainsaw* got harrassed from animal societies who thought the chickens were really getting tortured. They also cut out scenes where we cut up a bunch of Yuppies. I swear, I just couldn't figure why they took that out."

Siedow really liked new family member Chop-Top, but compared to Edwin Neal's Hitchhiker, he just didn't stack up. "Bill Moseley was good, but he acted more like a cartoon character," Siedow allows. "Ed Neal, on the other hand, played his part with evil, much more evil." Asked to compare Marilyn Burns with *'Saw 2* heroine Caroline Williams, Siedow reaches the same consensus: "Caroline was good, but she didn't come close to Burns. However, she really didn't have the role Marilyn had, either. That role Burns had was a tough one. Caroline was a little 'laid back.' She didn't show enough fright at times. There she is, cornered by a chainsaw-wielding maniac, and she says, 'This isn't gonna work.' "

Shortly after *Chainsaw 2*, Siedow packed his bags and headed west to work with director Tobe Hooper once again on the *Amazing Stories* episode "Miss Stardust." "In that, I wasn't this horrible guy," he enthuses. "I wore a tuxedo and the whole works. We were shooting this in LA when *Chainsaw 2* was just coming out. I got a big kick out of those huge billboards all over the place with our pictures on them."

Jim Siedow has immensely enjoyed working with Tobe Hooper over the years. His work on the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* films has been a great pleasure and experience for him. Siedow casually adds that he looks forward to *Chainsaw 3*—which, he reveals, is in production, though Siedow probably won't be involved. "I spoke with Tobe not too long ago on the phone, when a third *Chainsaw* was first mentioned to me. I exclaimed, 'But you killed us all off!' Tobe pointed out that he didn't show it, so I said, 'But what about Leatherface?' Tobe replied, 'It's gonna take a lot more than running a chainsaw through him to kill off that big lug.' "

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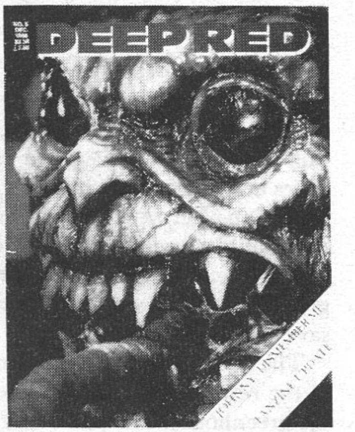

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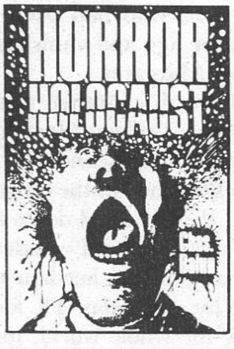
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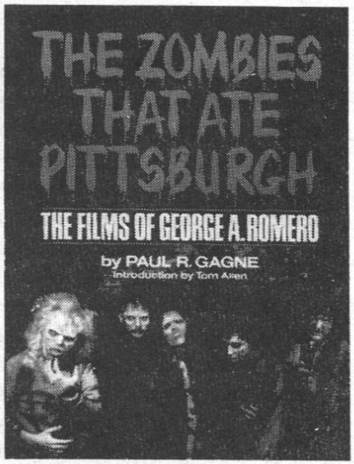
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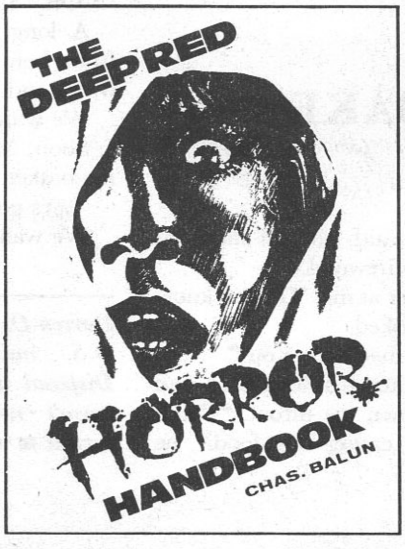
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JACKS

(continued from page 45)

At the first, measured step, the floor creaked a sharp protest. A nod. That could be fixed. Squatting awkwardly, she pried away her shoes and again drew herself to her feet. Smoothing her skirt, feeling hunched at the shoulders with caution, she left her room to cross the vast stillness to a greenhouse that was even more silent, save for the flowers singing.

The room she left was not really part of the rest of the house and neither was the greenhouse. She just thought of it all together, the way it was in homes where other children played. Her place and the greenhouse, the jacks in her skirt pocket and flowers and bugs, lived here. Mother was actually next door.

Four giant steps and about two baby steps would do it. Or ten baby steps, in all. She turned her head to stick out her tongue toward Mrs. August, edged into the greenhouse doorway.

"And how is your girl?" The antique voice wafted its way like something creaking open. "Has she been less... *difficult*, since I was here last?"

She saw a green bug, positively gigantic perched on the frail rim of a yellow flower. It lifted its incredibly gross head to regard her, munching as if it had a *right* to hurt, to destroy! They stared at one another, equally reflective and quiet. Satisfied that she posed no danger, the insect lowered its emerald head to continue its meal of beautiful blossom.

Big old bug! She eased the door of the greenhouse shut behind her. I'll show *that* damn nasty green thing!

Elaborately careful, she arched her lightning-quick hand above the intruder and imagined the bug was a silver jack, the *tenth* one that had always remained just out of reach. Holding her breath, tuning out the Mother and Mrs. August sounds, she focused her gaze until her eyes ached the way her wrist and fingers ached. Then she struck.

The green thing was between her fingers, swiveling its neckless head to stare, again, at the human being.

Nasty damn bug! She raised it to her lips and ate its face.

Trickles of thin green liquid worked their way down her fingers as she lifted what remained of the aggressor, the bad creature, toward her open mouth. Flowers carolled as one, thanking her, pouring their song upon her.

"No!"

Shocked—and caught—she threw the body down and whirled. Voiceless, she gaped open-mouthed at Mother and senile old Mrs. August. She used her tongue to try to swipe away the telltale green, and Mrs. August covered her own mouth.

"She isn't saying a word still," the ancient crone whispered. "Even after that, again, she just *stands*. Watching."

"She never speaks, not a word. Do you, Leanda?" Mother patted her shoulder with an expression Leanda had seen a thousand times and always thought it was like the way bugs studied her. "Been this way for *so* long." Mother sighed. "Tom's fault, 'cause he struck her that time, nearly 55 years ago come June. Didn't *mean* t'hurt her that way, of course. Poor Tom never got over it, neither. Had the saddest look in his green eyes to the day he died."

Why Mother called her Leanda, she didn't know. Never had figured that out, the way she had jacks. Leanda was the girl with golden curls who had been a playmate a long time ago and vanished, just like Janey and Margaret.

"Doesn't say a word," Mother said, leaning heavily on her walker. "Poor little Leanda. My poor little Leanda."

Who can't? She scratched at the crown of her silver head, then glanced down at the stain on her fingers without wondering whether she had left it in her hair as well. Can so! Why, someday I'll fool them all, I'll show the whole world, just like I show them bugs! I'll talk, and talk, and tell 'em everything...

After I catch the tenth jack, thought Leanda. ◆

J.N. Williamson's* Masques III, *featuring new stories by Ray Bradbury and others, will be released this summer by St. Martin's Press. Williamson's latest novel is* The Black School *from Dell Books.

CLAM BAKE

(continued from page 47)

"Right!" Mom said, and off she went with him to find firewood.

Dad looked over at me. "Do you know that fellow?" he asked.

"Nope. Never met him. You?"

"Never." He tilted his head back and an oyster slid down his throat. "Think he's about done eating our food?" he asked, and swallowed another one.

"I hope so. Are we leaving soon, Dad?"

He squinted at the horizon where a quarter moon was hanging. He nodded. "Probably."

Mom and the guy came back. They were carrying armloads of dry, white wood. Then the guy (he said his name was Sammy) built a huge fire and opened one of Dad's beers. He held it up and yelled, "Cheers!"

Mom cheered him right back and they drank. And drank. And drank. Mom drinks like a fish, sometimes, but I love her.

Done eating (for a few, anyway), I sat back and watched the lake. The surface wasn't moving at all, not a ripple, as if a sheet of black plastic covered the whole thing. In the middle of it shone a big, slitted eye—the reflection of the moon—and even *that* didn't seem to move.

My Reeboks started smoking then and I pulled them away from the fire. "Hey, Jasmine," I said. "Let's go for a walk."

We got up without saying anything to anybody and walked down toward the water. I looked across to the opposite shore and saw no other campfires. Except for crickets, I could hear no noises. Jas faced me, looked a little green around the gills again. "I wanna go home," she whined.

"Me, too," I said.

Soon, Dad came down and joined us, sliding an arm around my shoulder. He patted Jasmine on the head.

"Daddy?" she asked, looking up at him. "How come we ain't goin' home?"

"Any time now, hon. Your mom's found a new friend," he said.

"Oh." She looked away.

A long, high scream ripped the air from behind us. It skipped over the water and bounced back.

We waited.

Soon, Mom came down with the picnic basket. It was almost full.

"Let's go home," she said.

We walked into the lake. ◆

Darren O. Godfrey spent six years on the U.S. military's Explosive Ordinance Disposal unit. Being in a bomb squad wasn't nervewracking enough, so he turned to writing fiction.

SPECIAL GUEST COLUMN
By MARK SHOSTROM

MAKEUP **FX** LAB

Mark & Ted's "Evil Dead" Adventure

With my colleagues Caglione & Drexler up to their ears in prosthetics on that dream project of theirs, GOREZONE editor Tony Timpone asked if I could supply a guest column. I glanced around my lab at several sculptures I was at work on. I had shooting schedules pending and an actor due any minute for a life cast. Naturally, I responded, "Sure, I can fit it in."

After all, a magazine with regular articles on makeup FX is something *I* didn't have as a kid.

Tony suggested I write a piece explaining *Evil Dead II*'s Henrietta makeup, a combination of body suit and facial appliances. No sooner said than done. Let's take a stroll into the plaster room and see if Ted Raimi is ready for some body casting. . .

Mark Shostrom is best known for contributing special makeup FX to From Beyond, Phantasm II, Deepstar Six *and the upcoming* Shadow Zone.

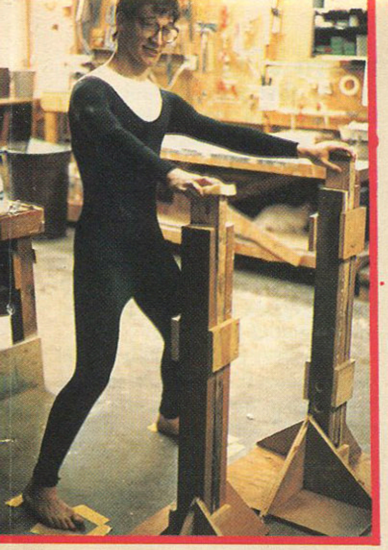

PHOTO 1: Ted Raimi, looking rather dashing in a black leotard, gets in position for the body cast. The spandex protects his body hair and provides a smooth molding surface. Skin detail is not needed, since the suit will be quite thick. I put a thin coat of Vaseline on the spandex, then Ted's back is done first, using precut strips of burlap dipped in white Hydrocal. We premeasured four batches each of 1 quart water to 2 level dry quart measures of Hydrocal. With three to four people working, the back is done within 10 minutes. Wood strips strengthen the cast.

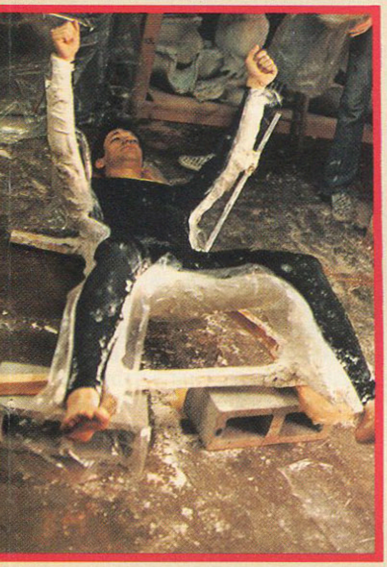

PHOTO 2: Half an hour later, after Ted has been removed from the mold, his back-half plaster negative is laid down, and he climbs back into it. Plastic dropcloth separates the plaster median, so that the second half of the plaster mold will not stick to the first.

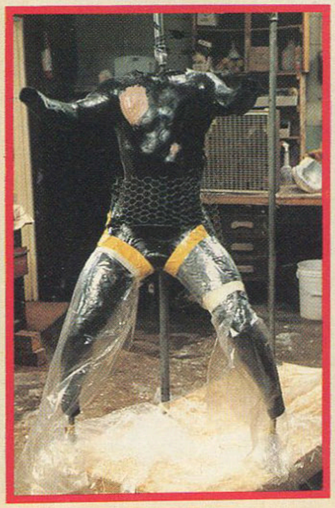

PHOTO 3: After Ted's second half is made, the two negatives are coated with a stearic acid separator. A fiberglass replica is made. It is very lightweight—an important factor, since eventually this fiberglass body will hold about 450 pounds of clay. (Incidentally, Ted's slightly squatting position for the cast will enable the final foam suit to flex with less stress at the joints.)

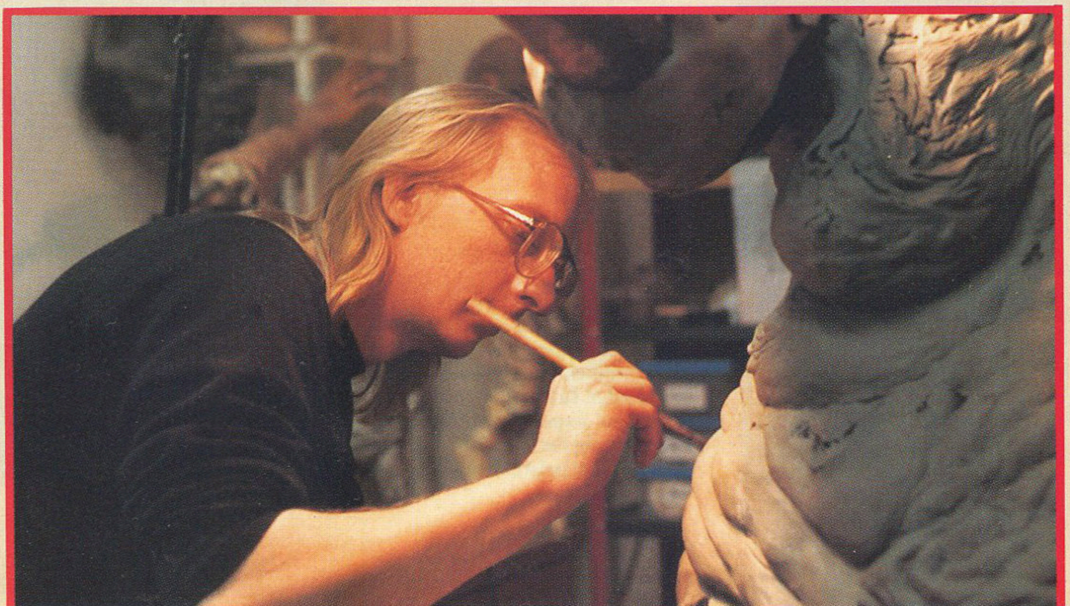

PHOTO 4: I sculpt the body using Roma plastilina. Although I considered using clay due to the sculpture's size, I decided against it because I didn't want to constantly cover it and keep wetting it. Furthermore, the mold over this would be fiberglass; during the three days that mold would take, thin areas of wet clay would have cracked.

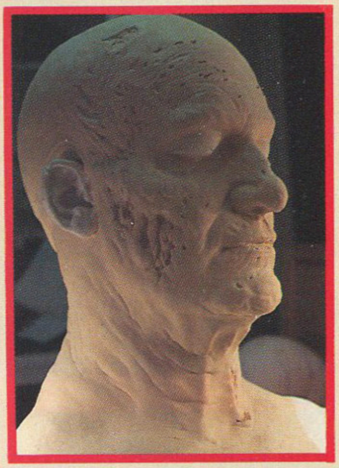

PHOTO 5: The rough head sculpture, done in white plastilina. Ted's Hydrocal head cast receives three coats of Alcote dental separator. After drying the Alcote, the plastilina is sculpted onto the cast.

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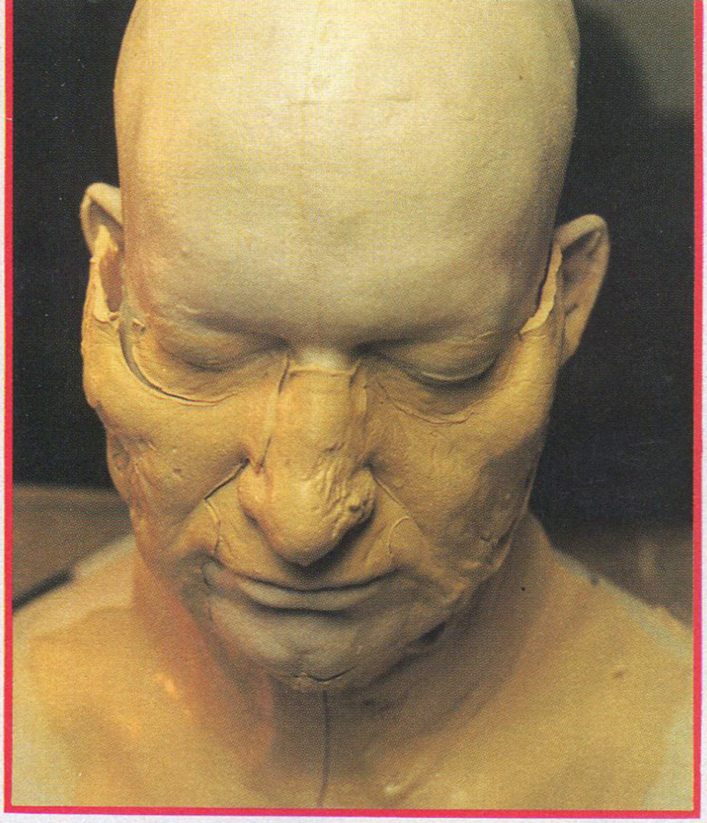


PHOTO 6: The whole head soaks in a tub of water overnight, which reactivates the Alcote into a slippery film, loosening the clay. I slice the clay where I want the appliances to overlap. Here the chin, forehead and rear skull have been removed and placed on section molds.

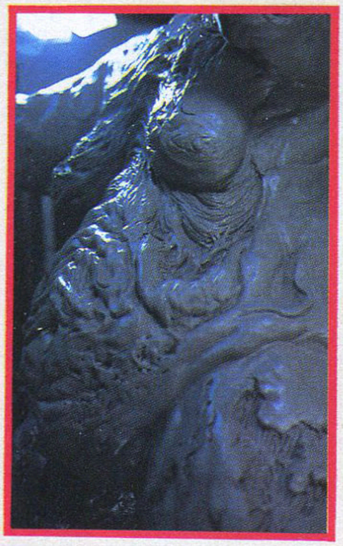


PHOTO 7: Henrietta's bloated plastilina body is done. In preparation for the fiberglass mold, we spray the clay with clear acrylic and several coats of PVA (a standard release for fiberglass).

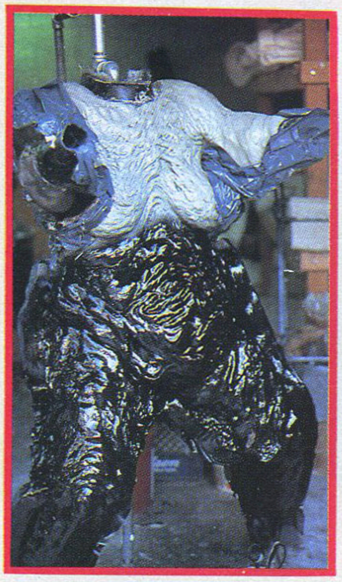


PHOTO 8: Black gel-coat resin is used for the first layer. The color makes troublesome bubbles easier to spot. I brought in fiberglass expert Don (*Cocoon*) Pennington for the job, and he fabricated a pristine mold.

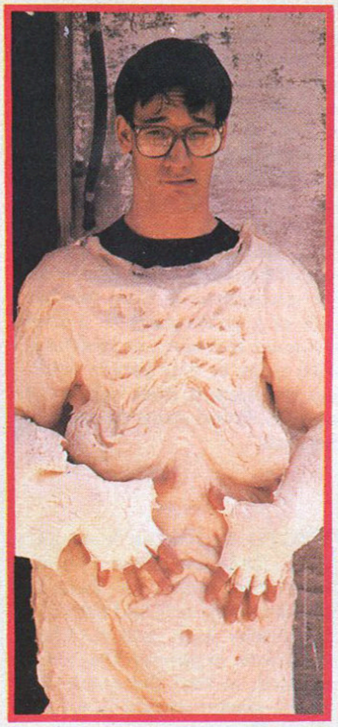


PHOTO 9: Ted excitedly tries on the first polyurethane foam test suit. To create the foam skin, we coat our fiberglass molds with wax and silicone release agents (BJB 86 release and fiber resin FR 1000), then spray with a urethane film to get a good "skin" surface. Ted's fiberglass body is placed between the fiberglass negatives, and the molds bolted together.

1014 fiber resin by Polytech is the foam used. Several measured batches are prepared using jiffy-mixer drill attachments. Timing is critical—a difference of a mere *three seconds* can result in a bad mix.

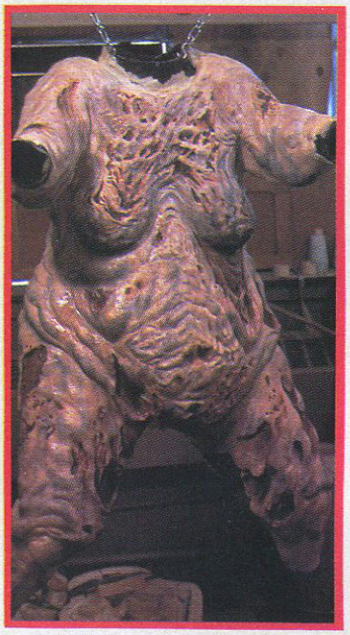


PHOTO 10: Three thousand miles and a week later, the painted suit hangs in the *Evil Dead II* makeup lab. After using Dick Smith's PA-X formula of Pros-Aide and Liquitex acrylic paints as a base, I hand-paint and airbrush washes of watercolor and thinned PA-X.

PHOTO 11: I give the split-open areas a wetter look by coating the painted washes with Phlex-glue.

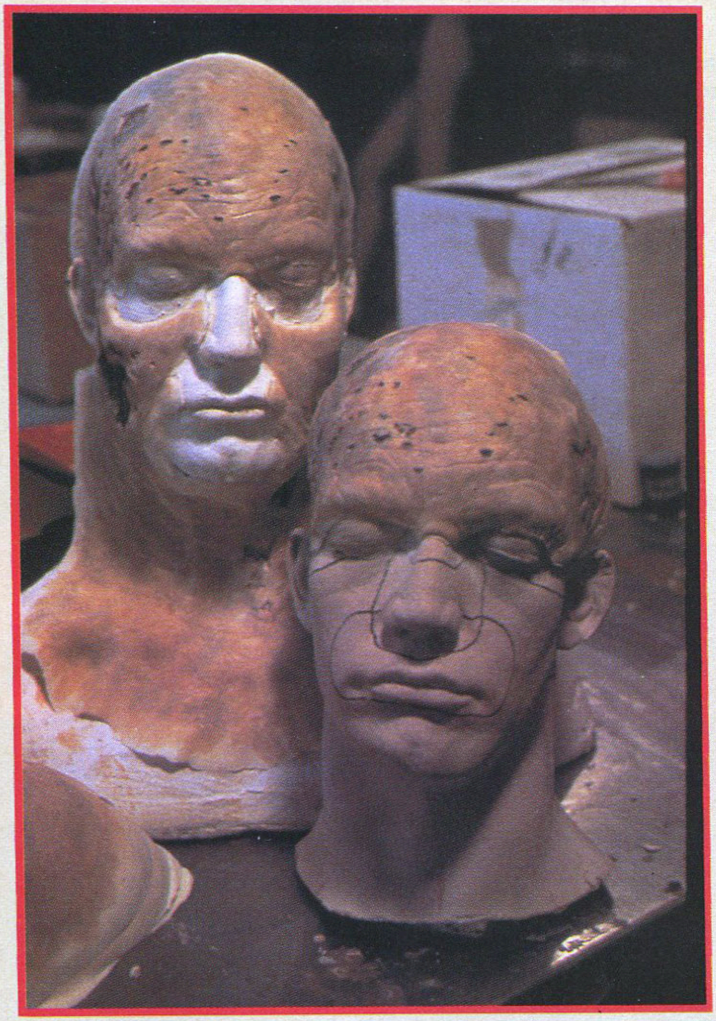
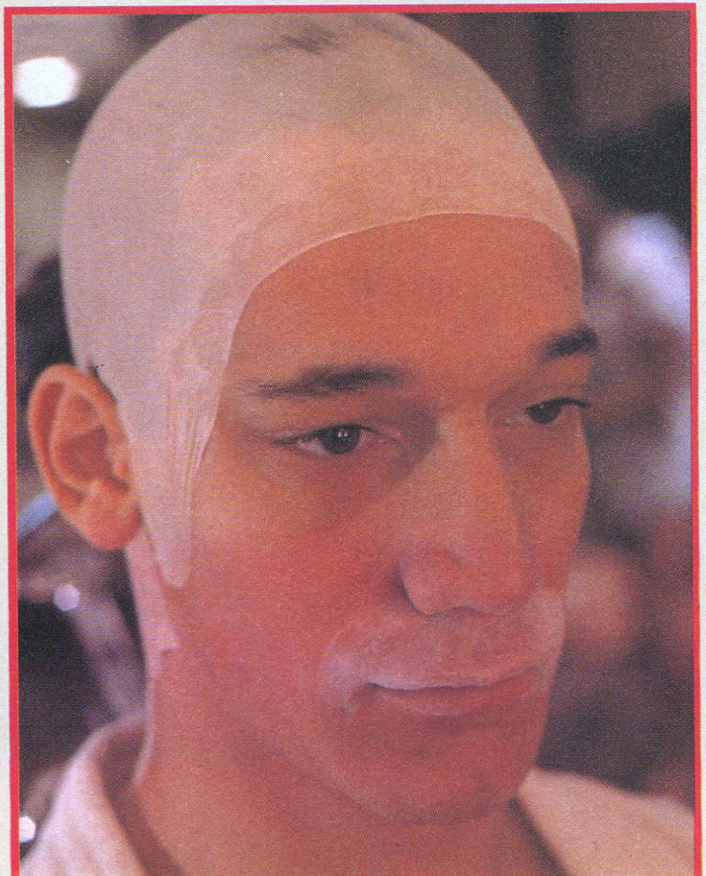


PHOTO 12: Henrietta's prepainted foam latex appliances rest on forms of Ted's face.

PHOTO 13: With baldcap in place, Ted has his upper lip preglued with Dow 355 medical adhesive, then powdered.



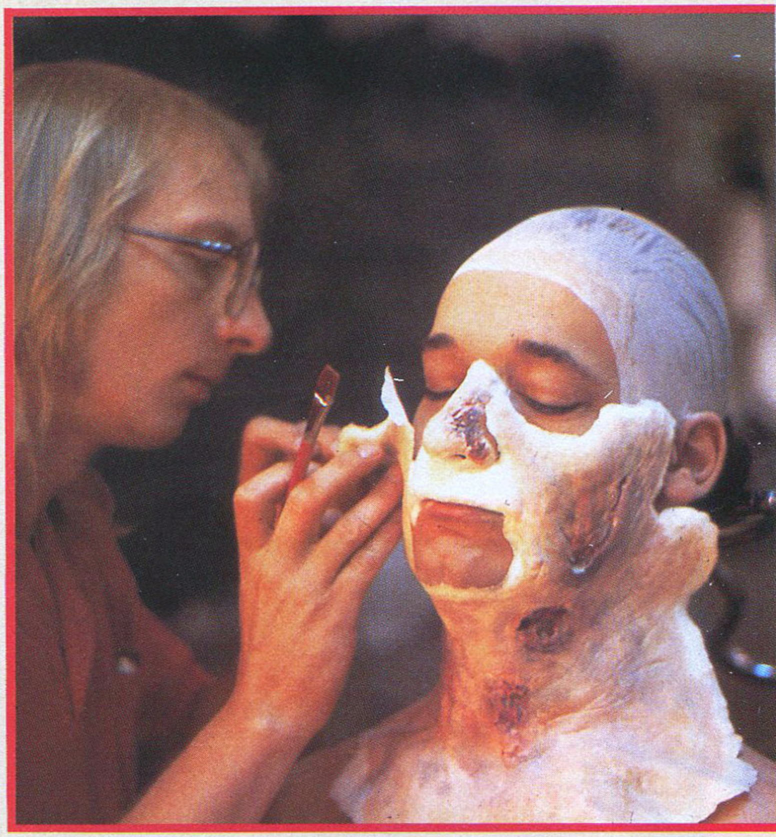


PHOTO 14: The preglued upper lip is applied, followed by the nose and wraparound jowl piece.

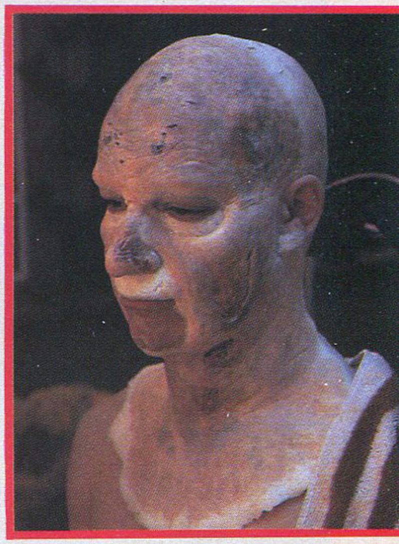


PHOTO 15: All the face appliances are in place except for the chin. At this point, Ted has lunch while I prepare the wig and Bob Kurtzman readies the arm appliances and slip-on latex feet. No need for Odor-Eaters.

PHOTO 16: The wig is glued on with mat spirit gum, and then I apply the final makeup touches.

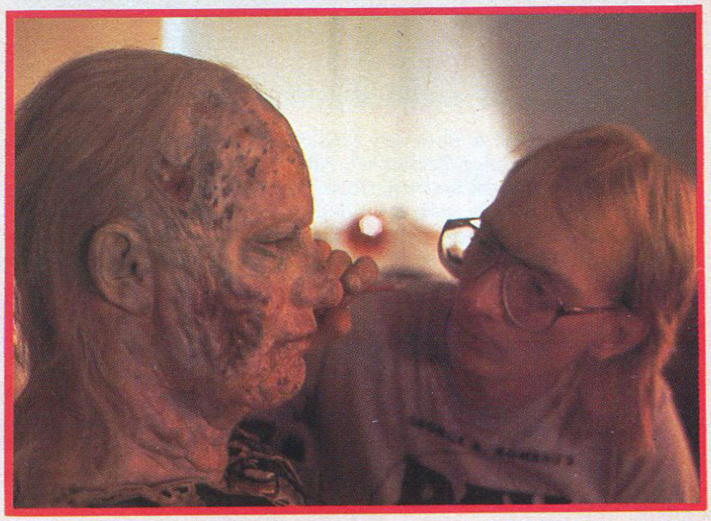


PHOTO 17: Having administered the forearm appliances, Bob now slips on those terrifying tootsies.

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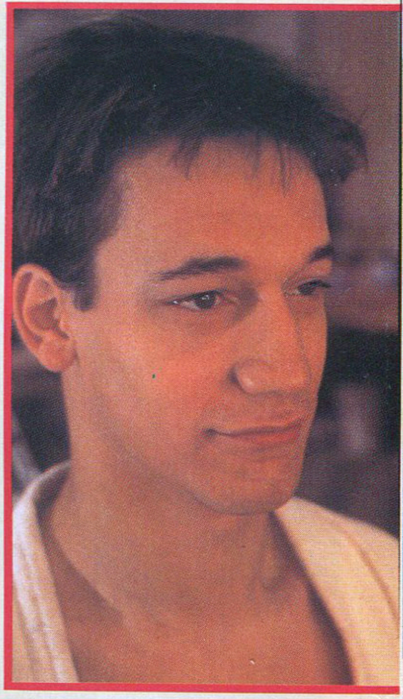


PHOTO 19: Before . . .

PHOTO 20: . . . and after. The final torture touches I gave Ted were dentures and white scleral contact lenses. After his brother Sam tosses him down a few flights of stairs and sends Bruce Campbell after him with a chainsaw, Ted will wish he'd never gotten out of the makeup chair.

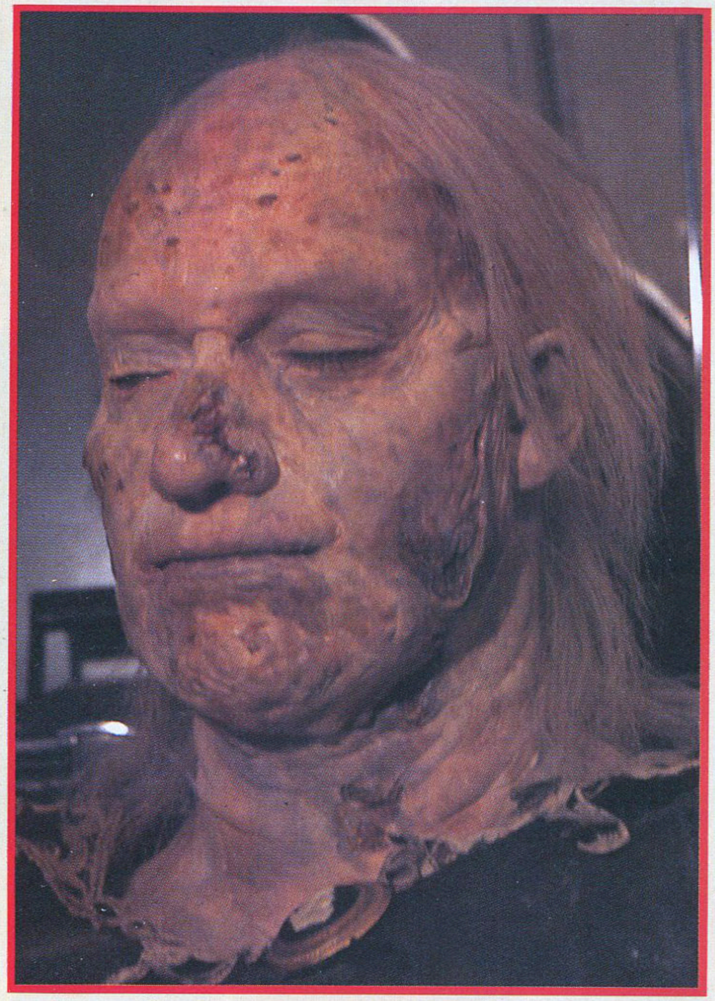
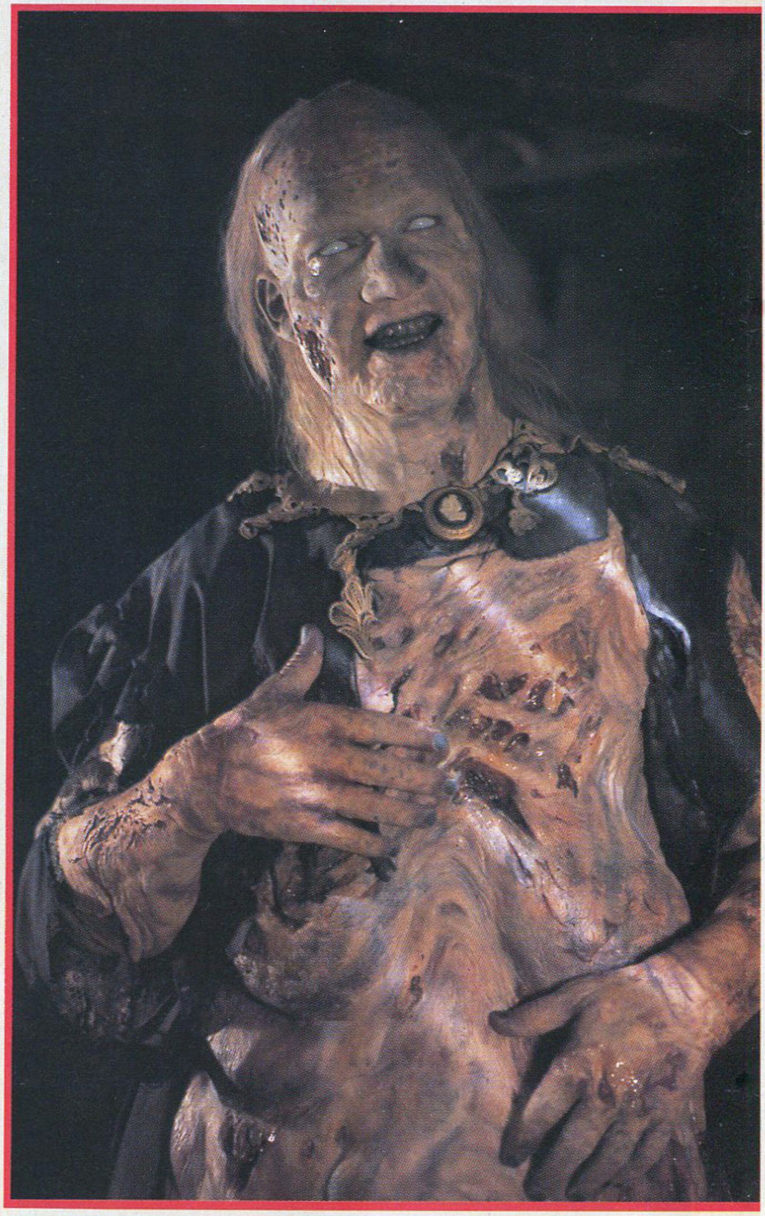


PHOTO 18: Ted is now very thrilled at the prospect of a day's shooting on the (literally) hot set. After six hours of makeup, he'll spend the next eight hours performing. Most of Ted's scenes take place during a heat wave (105 degrees outdoors, a brisk 90 on set), so he must endure extreme discomfort. Despite this, his enthusiasm and positive spirit prevail. He comes through like a champ. Take a bow, Teddy.



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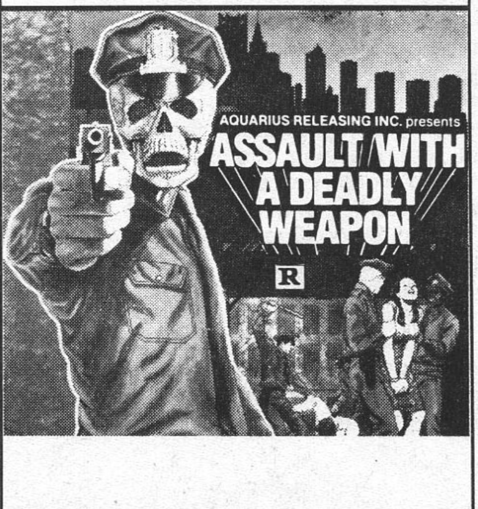
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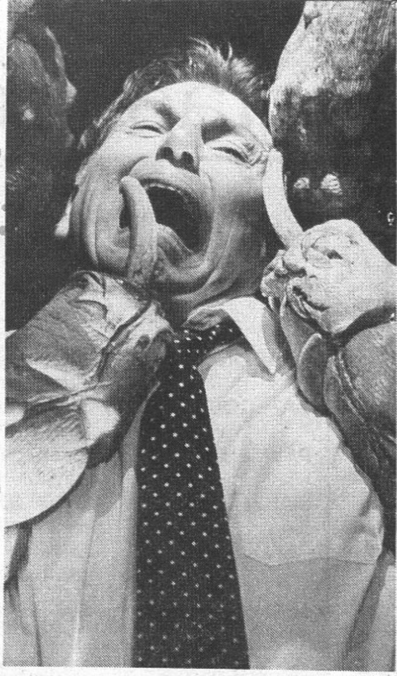
VIDEO WATCHDOG

By TIM LUCAS



Viewers of the unrated **Hellbound: Hellraiser II** can finally see the lengthier cenobitization of Dr. Channard.

Reckless REDNECK Reduction

Photo Courtesy Stephen Jochsberger

Dr. Cyclops (no relation to the Fango medic) eyeballs his smashing video debut.

As a rule, the Watchdog tends to steer clear of made-for-video features. In the case of Troma's *Redneck Zombies*, I must make an exception. The advertisements for Trans World Entertainment's home video release of this live-action cartoon carry philanthropic quotes from *Deep Red*'s Dennis Daniel and FANGORIA's Tim Ferrante, both attesting to its nonstop avalanche of state-of-the-woodshed bloodbags, bilebarfs, carcasscuts and severed netherthingies that, for most viewers of the tape, will never materialize.

Why? Ed Bishop, the film's producer, supplies the answer. "Through a series of events that can only be described in words I don't know you well enough to use," Bishop says, "Troma chopped literally *all* of the effects out of *Zombies* to insure a fast R rating and to satisfy Trans World's demand for an alternative version, without spending much money. Unfortunately, this 'quick and cheap' editing also removed entire climactic scenes, the plot and most of the zombies, leaving a goreless mess of awful jumpcuts and unresolved scenes in the process. This, of course, was all done without our knowledge and, by the time we found out, it was too late to do anything."

Bishop goes on to explain that Troma provided the R version only as an alternative for markets refusing unrated material, not realizing that Trans World would proceed to list and advertise *only* the softer edition. According to Bishop, "Stores were told that no unrated version existed." A letter-writing campaign eventually prompted the company to issue the unrated version, but long after interested stores had already stocked a version that *doesn't* "really deliver the goods," as Dennis Daniel promises. The film's producer laments of the R version, "There *are* no goods."

The Watchdog especially hates this kind of thing because 1) the MPAA rating system was developed for theatrical motion pictures and is legally and technically *inapplicable* to made-for-video features; 2) it compromises and damages the critical veracity of my colleagues; and 3) it impels me to watch not one, but *two* versions of *Redneck Zombies* on behalf of you, the potentially screwed-over reader, when I could be watching Franco's *Furia en el Tropico*.

There is a six-minute difference between the two versions, and the blunt, artless hacking of the so-called R version (it's closer to a PG-13) is worthier of a henhouse than an editing room. If your deck has slo-mo capability, you can see that Troma removed virtually every shot with blood in it on the frame; they weren't taking any chances. Both versions, small mercy, contain Perky Piglet's cameo and the scene where a guy's T-shirt changes between shots as he's jumped by a zombie.

If you unwittingly bought an R-rated copy of *Redneck Zombies* for (gag!) $79.95 and would like a chance to replace it with the 100-proof variety, perhaps Trans World Entertainment would do the honorable thing and help. Their address, if you'd care to ask how they feel on the subject, is 6430 Sunset Boulevard, Suite 505, Hollywood, CA 90028.

HIS BARKER WORSE THAN HIS CENOBITE

Bad word-of-mouth and a censorious R rating led me to skip the theatrical playdates of *Hellbound: Hellraiser II*, but I found New World's *unrated* cassette to be a lot of fun. If it's junk, at least it's luscious junk and, like its predecessor, pushes its horrors into erotic and psychological areas seldom dared by the commercial cinema.

The unrated version of this Clive Barker tale runs 98 minutes, nearly five minutes longer than the theatrical cut. Among the additional (or should I say "original"?) highlights are sadistic flashbacks involving the ambitiously evil Dr. Channard and the traumatized Tiffany, much of Julia's bloody resurrection, Pinhead's and Channard's respective baptisms as Cenobites and their respective vein-glorious demises, and any and all shots attempting a dangerous, visual, visceral blending of sex and violence. It also seemed—to these two eyes—that the intro's reprise of *Hellraiser*'s finale, with Andrew Robinson being pulled apart by hellhooks, was a trifle less abbreviated here. Anyway, a phone call to one amigo who saw *Hellbound* in a theater last year indicated he hadn't seen *any* of the movie's best moments.

> **H*ellbound: Hellraiser II* pushes its horror into erotic and psychological areas seldom dared by commercial cinema.**

So, on the basis of my preview cassette: *recommended*. We'll have to wait for the street copies, though, to see whether New World learned their lesson about hawking those *Hellraiser* sweatshirts, snow tires and coffee mugs.

THE NEVER-SAGGING SAGA

One of this column's now-perennial features is the announcement of release dates for uncut copies of Don Edmonds' *Ilsa* quartet, the mind-boggling S&M/gore series starring Dyanne Thorne. Despite numerous mentions, somehow it's never quite happened. Some months back, Cinepix announced the first-ever uncut release of Jess Franco's *Ilsa the Wicked Warden* (1977), but only a handful of copies made it into stores before the company's American division expired.

In the latest chapter of this never-ending saga, American Video has acquired the video rights to the uncut versions of *Ilsa—She-Wolf of the SS* (1974), *Ilsa—Harem Keeper of the Oil Sheiks* (1976) and, yes, *Ilsa the Wicked Warden*. All three should be available by the time you read this, at a suggested retail price of $59.95 each, or $149.85 for the bargain three-pack.

After screening advance copies of American's *Ilsa* titles, the Watchdog is pleased to report that these are finally the real article. Whereas earlier releases have tended to be either too soft or sharp in focus, American's tapes are beautifully produced and feature the best in resolution this series has yet seen on cassette. Purists will further appreciate that American has packaged the series in handsome fascimilies of their original Videatrix boxes. *Harem Keeper of the Oil Sheiks* is a particular revelation, since even its Videatrix release was incomplete, with several explicit sequences simply blacked out. By the way, if you think you recognize El Sheik (Victor Alexander), perhaps you know the actor better now by another name: Yes, that's Spalding Gray, of *Swimming to Cambodia* and *True Stories* fame.

Unfortunately, the series' third entry, *Ilsa—The Tigress of Siberia* (1977), will *not* be part of the American Video release, since it is presently owned by another company; it is available from Charter Entertainment in a thoroughly bowdlerized version titled *The Tigress*. The full version—which includes a round of chainsaw arm-wrestling that anticipates Cronenberg's *The Fly* (!) and the same library music score heard in *Rabid* (!!)—has not been seen in this country since its 1980 playdates on the now-defunct cable service ON-TV. American's previous release *Ilsa—Absolute Power* (the watered-down version of *Wicked Warden* mentioned last column) has been withdrawn from sale.

Last issue, we apologized to Marshall Discount Video for the landslide of orders this column prompted for suddenly unavailable *Ilsa* titles. Now you can feel free to hit them with all you've got at Box 328, Dept. GZ9, Trenton, MI 48183.

FRANJU! GESUNDHEIT!

Interama Video Classics, a New York-based company specializing in rare classics of New Wave French cinema, has officially released Georges Franju's *Eyes Without a Face* (*Les Yeux sans Visage*, 1959), the Watchdog's personal favorite of all horror films. Unlike Sinister Cinema's *The Horror Chamber of Dr. Faustus* (the film's American version, which runs a full four minutes shorter), *Eyes* is in the original French, with English subtitles. Sinister was offering a dark, barely readable dupe of this version a few years ago; if you bought that copy, you'll want to replace it immediately with one of these. Interama's picture quality is perfect.

Speaking of Franju, Video Yesteryear has released his seminal splatter documentary *The Blood of the Beasts* (*Les Sang des Betes*, 1949) at $19.95. A short documentary observing the daily rituals of workers in a slaughterhouse, its way of observing dispassionate butchery with a poet's eye makes it a perfect companion piece to *Eyes Without a Face*.

THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR GIALLO

San Francisco's Loonic Video incorrectly promotes their new release *The Hyena of London* as a British production. It's actually Gino Mancini's *La Jena de Londra* (1963), a forgotten albeit fascinating feature from the Italian Golden Age. The credits are a mess of

Photo: Courtesy Stephen Jochsberger

There's a right and wrong way to open your *Satanic Rites of Dracula* video box. This is the wrong way.

Americanized misinformation (Mancini is credited as "Henry Wilson"), but the cast includes such period luminaries as Tony Kendall, Alan Collins and, in her only other known role, Claude Dantes (the striking drowned model in Mario Bava's immortal *Blood and Black Lace*), who looks 30 pounds heavier here. Of special interest are the castle exteriors (you'll remember them from *Terror in the Crypt* and *Castle of the Living Dead*), the interiors (from *The Horrible Dr. Hichcock*) and the score by "Frank Mason," (a.k.a. Francesco de Masi) which was used the same year in Riccardo Freda's *The Ghost*.

> **MCA's *Dr. Cyclops* comes as a genuine revelation to eyes accustomed to viewing faded prints edited for 90-minute timeslots.**

The Ghost, by the way, has finally been officially issued by Liberty/ABC Video, one of the most promising and extraordinary companies to surface in some time. Like their previous release *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* (see last column), *The Ghost* sports stunningly crisp picture quality, is recorded in Hi-Fi, comes attractively packaged in full color, and can be found in some stores for as little as $14.95. Despite a somewhat splicy first reel, the enhanced color and picture quality of ABC's release renders all other versions of *The Ghost* obsolete.

Photo: Courtesy Alan Upchurch

Barbara Steele of *The Ghost* still sets hearts a-flutter.

A small caveat concerning *Satanic Rites*: It seems that all copies of the tape were packaged in skin-tight boxes, the kind you must tear open. To preserve your packaging, the Watchdog suggests opening the top flap with a slender letter-opener or butter knife, pushing the cassette out through the top.

Suspiria fanatics will want to check out Imperial's *Obsession: A Taste for Fear*. While there's little discernible talent (but much discernible nudity) in front of the camera, the film was photographed by the incredible Luciano Tovoli, who goes even more color-crazy here than in *Tenebrae*!

SEQUELITIS HITS THE RETREADS

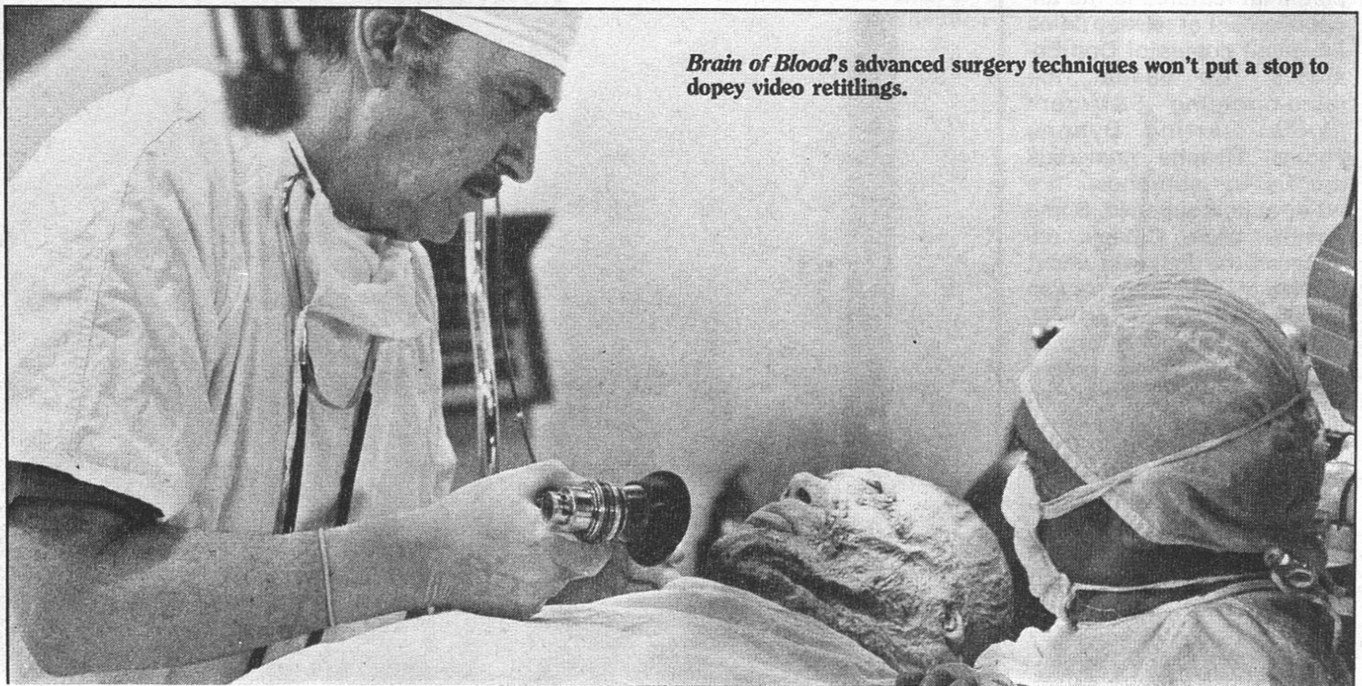
Be warned of a new, alleged "series" of horror films from Degregory Video, all lurking under the bizarre group heading *Facing All Death, Volumes 1-8*. The eight films, in no way related, are retitled copies of product already glutting the marketplace under other names. *The Vengeful Dead*, for example, which stars Fabian and Marilyn Burns, is already in circulation from Genesis Video as *Revenge of the Zombie*. Among the other movies hiding under new monikers amid this mockery are *Brain of Blood*, *The Demon Lover* and Herbert Strock's *Monster*.

EERIE SCHMALTZ FROM THE MCA VAULTS

Remember the Watchdog's announcement of the color screen test footage which MCA Home Video planned to release with *Son of Frankenstein*? Well, for reasons they have chosen to keep to themselves, the cassette has been released *without* the expected supplements. It's a great disappointment, and one can only hope they'll reconsider when the time comes to issue the film on laserdisc.

MCA's *Dr. Cyclops*, on the other hand, comes as a genuine revelation to eyes accustomed to viewing faded prints edited for 90-minute TV timeslots. Directed by Ernest (*King Kong*) Schoedsack, this 1940 classic was the first horror film shot in full, three-strip Technicolor—and MCA has served up a gorgeous print indeed. GoreZonians who pooh-pooh

Photo: Courtesy Stephen Jochsberger



***Brain of Blood*'s advanced surgery techniques won't put a stop to dopey video retitlings.**

Redneck Photos: Bill Decker

Doesn't everyone's neck blow bubbles?

CENSORED!

The R-rated *Redneck Zombies* ain't no picnic, but the unrated version gives splatter fans plenty to chew on.

CENSORED!

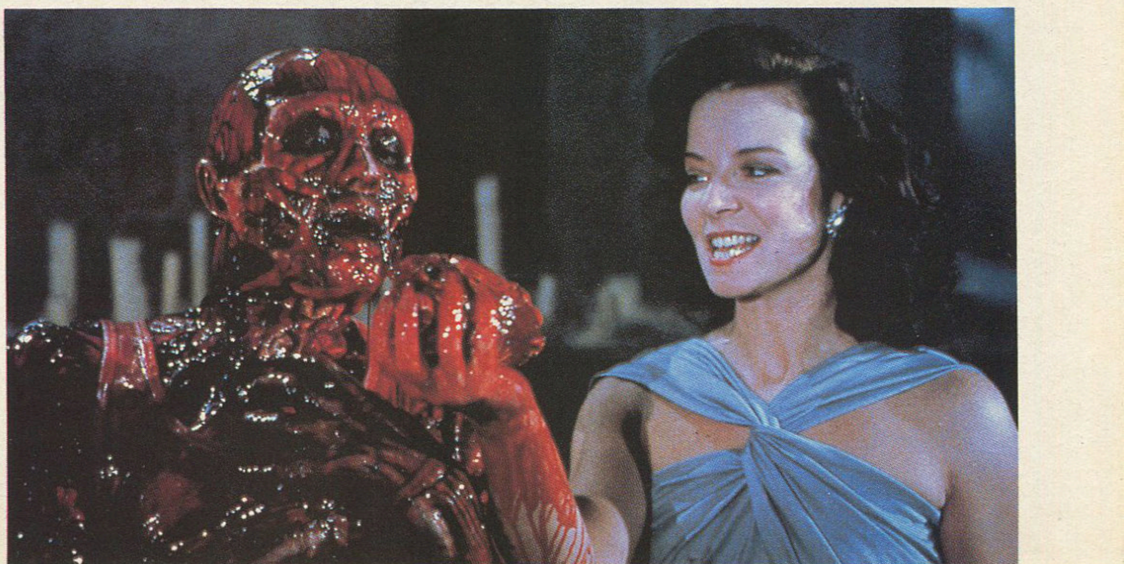
anything older than *Night of the Living Dead* will have to admit that the first scene still packs a heavy chill.

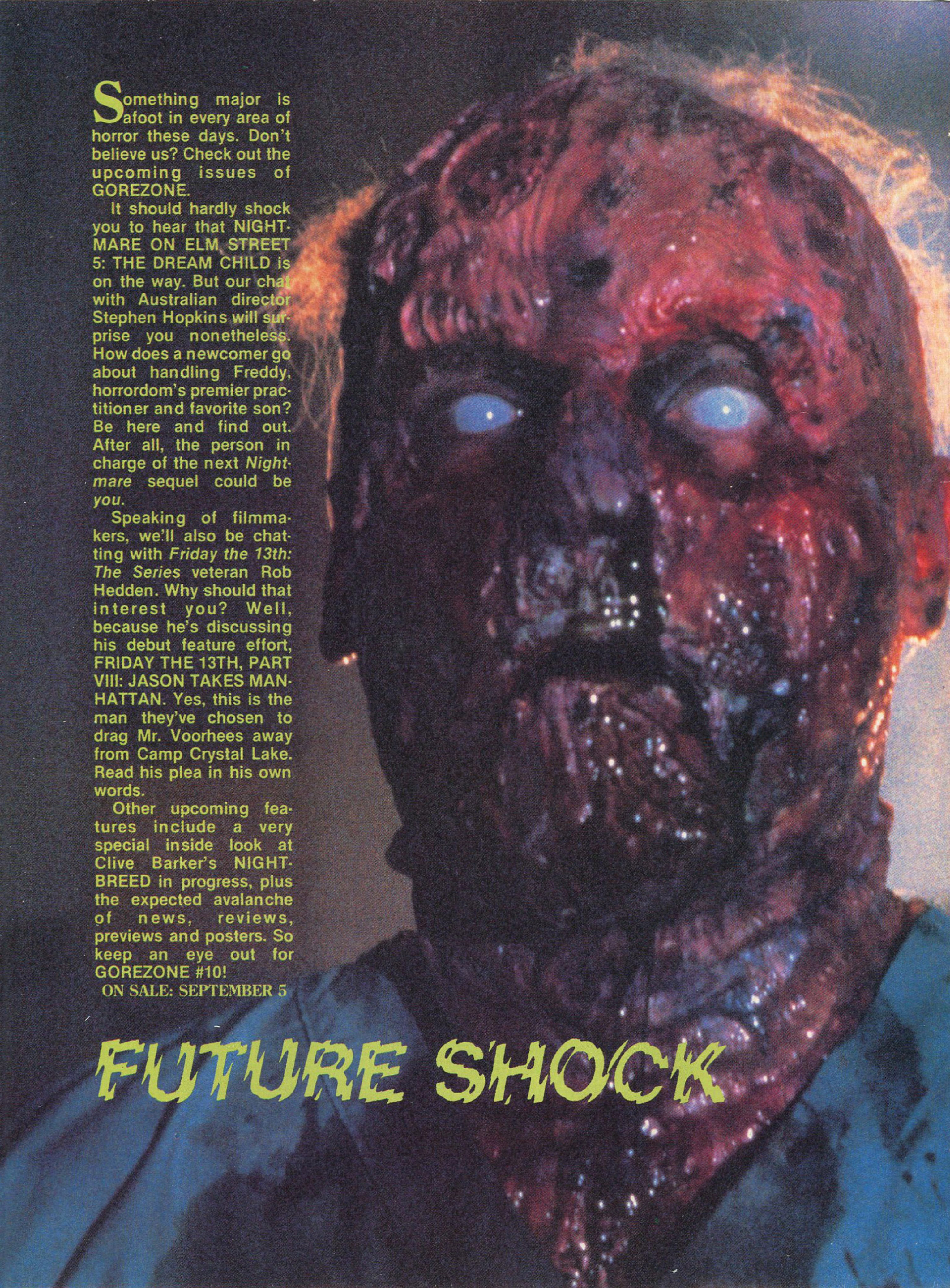
TURNER ON TOURNEUR

The Watchdog finds it useful to check the TNT network movie listings in *TV Guide* for short films in long timeslots. When TNT booked the 80-minute *Doctor X* in a 150-minute slot, I suspected some interesting padding. The film played (in restored two-strip Technicolor, natch) with normal commercial interruptions and ended 45 minutes early. Then TNT proceeded to show three vintage MGM shorts: Robert Benchley's *How to Start the Day*, *Phantoms Inc.* (marginal horror from the "Crime Does Not Pay" series) and, best of all, a "John Nesbitt's Passing Parade" short titled *The Incredible Stranger*—directed by none other than Jacques (or "Jack," as then credited) Tourneur! It was a Rockwellian slice of Americana about a reclusive psycho who moves into a small town and lives with life-size wax figures of his dead wife and kids!

Sometimes it's good to read even TV listings between the lines.

Hellbound Photos: Murray Close/Copyright 1988 New World


Julia finally realizes what a heartless cad Frank is.



FUTURE SHOCK

Something major is afoot in every area of horror these days. Don't believe us? Check out the upcoming issues of GOREZONE.

It should hardly shock you to hear that NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 5: THE DREAM CHILD is on the way. But our chat with Australian director Stephen Hopkins will surprise you nonetheless. How does a newcomer go about handling Freddy, horrordom's premier practitioner and favorite son? Be here and find out. After all, the person in charge of the next *Nightmare* sequel could be *you*.

Speaking of filmmakers, we'll also be chatting with *Friday the 13th: The Series* veteran Rob Hedden. Why should that interest you? Well, because he's discussing his debut feature effort, FRIDAY THE 13TH, PART VIII: JASON TAKES MANHATTAN. Yes, this is the man they've chosen to drag Mr. Voorhees away from Camp Crystal Lake. Read his plea in his own words.

Other upcoming features include a very special inside look at Clive Barker's NIGHTBREED in progress, plus the expected avalanche of news, reviews, previews and posters. So keep an eye out for GOREZONE #10!

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